

The Constitution of Holy Trinity Evangelical-Lutheran Church of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession

Approved by the Parish Assembly on 13 July 2008

Preamble: Purpose

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Article VII of the Augsburg Confession rightly states Scripture's teaching that the Church (which is to endure forever) "is the congregation of all believers"—that is, the very essence of the Church is that it is God's gathering of sinners in which He gives the forgiveness of sins so that those sinners are holy in His eyes. Thus, this Church is physically manifested where "the Gospel is preached in its purity, and the holy sacraments are administered according to the Gospel." The intention of this Constitution (and any related documents) is to order the affairs of this parish in such a way that God's Church would be and remain among us by the Holy Spirit's working through these means, since it is through their administration that saving faith in Christ is given and sustained (Augsburg Confession, Articles IV and V; all quotes are from the 2nd Henkel edition of the Book of Concord).

Since it is the will of our Lord Jesus Christ that His Church should bring to the whole world the forgiveness of sins that He earned by His perfect life and atoning death on the cross (Mark 16:16, Matthew 28:18–20, Acts 1:8) we, as a Christian parish, pledge our conformity to God's Word in doctrine and practice (Matthew 28:18–20, 1 Corinthians 1:10, Romans 16:17). Further, as Article VII of the Augsburg Confession states that "for the true unity of the Christian Church...this is sufficient... that the Gospel is preached therein, according to its pure intent and meaning, and that the sacraments are administered in conformity with the Word of God," we shall seek to structure the affairs and procedures of this parish in such a way that this unity is fostered and not eroded either by disagreement with Holy Scripture or by needless contentions concerning things neither commanded nor forbidden by God, but that "all things be done decently and in order" (1 Corinthians 14:40), that we "all speak the same thing" (1 Corinthians 1:10), "endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:3), so that we might be blessed to experience that of which the Psalmist speaks: "Behold, how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity" (Psalm 133:1).

Thus, we, the members of Holy Trinity Evangelical-Lutheran Church (UAC), set forth and by our own signatures accept the following Constitution, in accordance with which all spiritual and material affairs of our parish shall be conducted to God's glory and under His blessing.

Article I: Name

The name of this parish shall be:

*Holy Trinity Evangelical-Lutheran Church of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession of Harrison,
Arkansas*

incorporated in Boone County, under the laws of the State of Arkansas.

Article II: Confessional Standard

This parish accepts without reservation that:

- A) All the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments are the inspired, inerrant, and infallible Word of God;
- B) All the confessional writings contained in the Book of Concord of 1580 are a true and correct exposition of the Word of God;
- C) God's Word and the Confessions of His Church set forth and declare God's purpose and design for the Church and for the individual Christian; they are the standard for our faith and life, and according to them shall all controversies which may arise in this parish be decided and settled;
- D) Only such hymns and other music, liturgies, and prayers shall be used in the public services of this parish and in all ministerial acts as conform to and promote this Confessional Standard (Colossians 3:16–17).

Article III: Fellowship and Affiliation

Recognizing the fellowship that exists in Christ's Church on earth between those who trust in Christ alone for salvation and that such fellowship is to be demonstrated outwardly among those who are "united with each other in doctrine and in all doctrinal articles, as also in a right use of the holy sacraments," unanimously confessing the same in word and deed (Galatians 2:9; 1 John 1:3; Formula of Concord, Thorough Declaration X:31), this parish shall seek to affiliate with other orthodox Lutheran parishes, associations of parishes, or other such entities, and be affiliated with such as long as they remain true to the Word of God and the Lutheran Confessions, both in official doctrine and in actual practice. (Cf. Article II.)

Article IV: Membership

Members of this parish seek conformity with the Word of God in all things. Thus, they pledge to use the Means of Grace faithfully, regularly attending the Divine Service at Holy Trinity, searching the Scriptures at home, nurturing their children in them, and, as able, studying them with other members of the parish in its Bible classes and organizations, so that they may grow in Christian faith and life.

As such, they are those who have received a valid Christian Baptism according to the Word of the Triune God and who are under the spiritual care of this parish and her Pastor(s). In addition, Communicant members are those Baptized members who accept, without reservation, the Confessional Standard of Article II, have given satisfactory evidence of this, and are not members of any organization that maintains principles, doctrines, or conduct conflicting with God's Word and sound Lutheran doctrine.

Release from membership in this parish may be made:

- A) By transfer to another parish with whom we are in doctrinal fellowship;
- B) By transfer to the Church Triumphant through death;
- C) By excommunication.

The privileges and duties of membership, as well as the procedure for the reception and release of members, shall be found in the Handbook for Parish and Voters' Assemblies.

Article V: Organization

The following sections describe the structure of the parish with regard to its governance. All discussion at any level shall be governed by the Word of God and the Lutheran Confessions, and nothing shall be allowed to be resolved in any way that contradicts these. Further, all activities and resolutions shall conform to this Constitution and the appropriate handbook(s) established by the approval of the Parish Assembly. No one shall have any power or authority within the parish beyond that conferred upon him by the parish; the parish shall always retain the authority to administer its affairs.

A: Structure

We hereby establish a:

- A) Parish Assembly, consisting of all Communicant members;
- B) Voters' Assembly, consisting of the male adult communicant members of the parish who have been in regular attendance and are not under church discipline;
- C) Parish Council, consisting of such men as the parish recognizes as leaders, men well-versed in Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions and dedicated to Christian service.

B: Governance

The Parish Council will have broad authority to act on behalf of the parish in all matters, in conformity with this Constitution and the resolutions of the Parish Assembly.

All matters warranting formal input or a decision beyond that of the Parish Council shall be presented to the Parish Assembly so that a consensus may be achieved.

If a matter of urgency is unable to be resolved through the Parish Assembly it may be referred to the Voters' Assembly.

The procedures to be followed are set forth in the Handbook for Parish and Voters' Assemblies.

One member of the Parish Council shall be selected (by lot) each year to serve as Chairman of the parish. The Parish Council shall annually appoint a Secretary, a Treasurer, and a Financial Secretary (and such assistants as are necessary), as well as a Board of Trustees for the planning and carrying out of such physical work as the parish requires.

We adopt the office of *Küster*—a *clerk*, fulfilling the roles of *sexton* and *sacristan*.

Selection of a *Küster* or of a Parish Council member shall be by unanimous declaration of the Parish Assembly, as described in the Handbook for Parish and Voters' Assemblies. His term of service shall endure until death, disability, or departure from the parish prevents him from serving.

Article VI: Other Entities Within the Parish

Other entities (boards, committees, organizations, etc.) deemed beneficial for carrying out the purpose and objectives of the parish shall be formed and staffed by the Parish Council, with the approval of the Parish Assembly, as the need for such arises, and shall be governed by such handbook(s) as are

established and deemed applicable by the same.

Article VII: The Pastoral Office

Only those men (cf. 1 Timothy 2:12–15, 1 Corinthians 14:34–38) shall serve in the Office of the Ministry who are properly qualified (1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9), ordained, and rightly called. The procedure for Calling a man to the Office of the Ministry in this parish (whether as Presbyter/Bishop or Deacon) shall be set forth in the Handbook for Parish and Voters' Assemblies.

When a Pastor is called, it is for life, and removal from office is only on the basis of such reasons as are given in the written Word of God, as it is God Himself who has placed him into his Office (Acts 20:28), namely, persistent adherence to false doctrine; a scandalous or immoral life; or continued willful neglect or refusal to exercise properly the "Power of the Keys" entrusted to him. Charges of such shall be considered in accordance with the Handbook of the Parish Council.

Article VIII: Amendments

This Constitution and its associated Handbooks may be amended in any way that does not conflict with Article II of this constitution at any meeting of the Parish Assembly, provided:

- A) The amendment has first been accepted for consideration by the Parish Assembly;
- B) The membership has been notified of the proposed change(s) at least two Sundays in advance of the meeting at which the proposed amendment is to be acted upon;

Article IX: Property Rights and Division

Title to all real or personal property acquired by the parish, its organizations, or individuals, for use by the parish or its organizations, shall be held by the parish. Property shall not be purchased, disposed of, or encumbered in any manner except as prescribed by the Parish Assembly and in accord with the applicable laws.

It is contrary to the expressed will of God to have division in the Church (1 Corinthians 1:10, Psalm 133:1, John 17:21); however:

- A) If at any time a division should take place on account of doctrine, the property of the parish and all benefits connected therewith shall remain with those members who continue to adhere to the confession and practice of Article II, which shall be determined in conjunction with any bodies with which the parish is affiliated on the basis of doctrinal agreement.
- B) If a disagreement arises for any reason other than doctrine, the parish shall seek to resolve the controversy using all the resources God supplies, including the aid of faithful Pastors of the parish's choosing (with whom the parish is in doctrinal fellowship) and the appropriate officers of any body in which the parish holds membership. The disagreeing parties shall seek a compromise in the spirit of Christian love, which is not "self-seeking" or "easily angered" (1 Corinthians 13:4–7), but which always seeks the interests of others over self, after the pattern of our Lord's suffering for us on the cross (1 Corinthians 10:24, Galatians 6:2). If, however, a compromise cannot be reached, the position of the majority shall be accepted.
- C) In the event that the parish disbands entirely, the property and all rights connected therewith shall be distributed by resolution of the Parish Assembly to such not-for-profit entities as are in keeping with the purposes of this parish.

Handbook for Parish and Voters' Assemblies Holy Trinity Evangelical-Lutheran Church of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession

Approved by the Parish Assembly on 13 July 2008

Privileges and Duties of Membership

It shall be the privilege and duty of members of this parish to use the Means of Grace faithfully, regularly attending the Divine Service at Holy Trinity, and searching the Scriptures at home, nurturing their children in them, and in fellowship with other members of the parish in its Bible classes and organizations, so that they may grow in Christian faith and life and to contribute unselfishly, as God has blessed them, of their love, talents, and treasures for the extension of God's mission on earth. It is to be expected that those in whom Christ's Word dwells richly shall live a morally decent life before God and men, abstaining from works of the flesh (Galatians 5:18-21) and conducting themselves at all times to bring credit to the Church of Jesus Christ. In thanksgiving to God for the administration of His Means of Grace, they shall accord the Pastor honor, love, and obedience in his ministry of God's Word, and to support him in his ministrations with diligence and faithful prayers, to help him in the discharge of his duties by cordial one-mindedness (1 Corinthians 1:10), willing readiness, peaceable conduct, and in every other way possible, and to provide for his maintenance according to the ability of the parish.

Leaving the membership of this parish (or removal from it) terminates all privileges of membership, such as the reception of Holy Communion, transfer to a sister parish, the services of the parish and her Pastor with regard to Christian marriage and burial, and any claim against the properties of the parish.

Reception into Membership

Those who have received a valid Christian Baptism according to the Word of the Triune God and who are under the spiritual care of this parish and her Pastor(s) are considered Baptized members of the parish. Such Baptized members are admitted to the Lord's Supper who accept, without reservation, the Confessional Standard of Article II, have given satisfactory evidence of this, and who are not members of any organization that maintains principles, doctrines, or conduct conflicting with God's Word and sound Lutheran doctrine. They will be received into Communicant Membership by the Rite of Confirmation or by letter of transfer from orthodox Lutheran parishes as Confirmed members. If coming from a heterodox Lutheran parish, they shall be received by renouncing all that varies with the Confessional Standard of Article II through a "Profession of Faith." If they have been excommunicated they will have given satisfactory evidence of repentance.

One who seeks Communicant membership shall, having read the Constitution of this parish, pledge his acceptance of the same—and willingness to be governed by it—by affixing his signature to the official copy of the Constitution, and shall be admitted to membership during the next possible Divine Service.

All such Communicant members are members of the Parish Assembly. Male Communicant members who have reached the age of majority are members of the Voters' Assembly.

Release from Membership

Release from membership in this parish may be made:

- A) By transfer to another parish with whom we are in doctrinal fellowship;
- B) By transfer to the Church Triumphant through death;
- C) By excommunication: When members purposefully and willfully conduct their lives in clear and manifest disobedience to God's Word, such will be admonished according to the words of our Lord in Matthew 18:15-20. If they refuse to repent and amend their sinful life after such proper admonition, they shall be excommunicated by the Pastor(s) with the unanimous approval of the Parish Assembly at the meeting called for this purpose (cf. *The Small Catechism*, Part V, "Office of the Keys," Concordia Publishing House's *An Explanation of Luther's Small Catechism*, under "Church Discipline," and John 20:23). Any objections shall be spoken to with Christian love and understanding in accordance with Article II of our parish Constitution, and shall be resolved in a godly manner before the parish acts upon the excommunication itself.

Permanently relocating to another community (unless one is retained because of special circumstances) or leaving the church without contact information (thus, disabling it from exercising a proper fraternal relationship), joining a parish outside the doctrinal fellowship of this parish, persistent membership in any organization that maintains principles, doctrines, or conduct in conflict with Article II of our parish Constitution, purposeful and willful neglect of God's Word and Sacraments, refusal to submit to fraternal admonition as outlined above, or a written request to be excluded from membership shall have the same effect as a completed process and declaration of excommunication.

Organization and Governance

Rationale for and Routine Functions of the Parish Council

All that the Word of God tells us concerning the necessary structure of the local parish is that the Office of the Ministry is to be established in its midst, the Holy Spirit setting such men into the Pastoral office as are necessary by means of the Church (Acts 20:28, Titus 1:5–10). As the Church saw the need to have some Pastors serve in specialized roles (Acts 6:1–6) and found the members of various parishes supplying the facilities for God's people to be gathered around His Gospel and Sacraments (Romans 16:5, 1 Corinthians 16:19, etc.), it is well that certain church officers be selected who can assist the Pastor (and take care of the needs of the Pastor, his family, the parishioners, and the church property) so that he is better able to carry out the work of the Ministry. For this reason, this parish has established a Parish Council, which will have broad authority to act on behalf of the parish in all matters, in conformity with the parish Constitution and the resolutions of the Parish Assembly. They shall meet as often as necessary for the consideration of the needs of the parish.

The Parish Council shall annually appoint a Secretary, a Treasurer, and a Financial Secretary (and such assistants as are necessary). These shall be responsible to the Parish Council and the parish at large for the conduct of their offices, regularly reporting for the benefit of the parish.

The Parish Council shall also appoint such men from their number as are appropriate to lead a Board of Trustees. They shall gather for this board such other members as are profitable for the planning and carrying out of such physical work as the parish requires and shall be responsible to the Parish Council for the board's activities.

Selection of a Parish Council member shall be done as follows. The Parish Council shall seek to establish whether anyone is particularly thought of by the parish as a candidate for this office. After

reviewing those who have been suggested and establishing for whom a consensus already exists, the Parish Council shall present any such individuals to the parish for comment for a period of 30 days, after which they shall present such name(s) as they consider appropriate to the Parish assembly, the unanimous declaration of which shall be necessary to ratify appointment to this office. The term of service for a Parish Council member shall endure until death, disability, or departure from the parish prevents him from serving.

Beyond the expenses approved in the annual spending guidelines, the Parish Council shall be authorized to make necessary expenditures of no more than \$500 without prior approval of the Parish Assembly.

Procedures of the Parish Assembly

All matters warranting formal input or a decision beyond that of the Parish Council shall be presented to the Parish Assembly, in which all communicant members shall have the opportunity to discuss the matters at hand so that a consensus may be achieved. It shall meet annually in November for the establishment of the year's spending guideline, and as often as there is other business to bring before it, announcing such meetings a minimum of two Sundays in advance.

As all things are to be done "decently and in order" (1 Corinthians 14:40), and so that situations that might prevent a scripturally-informed discussion or that contradict Christian love (Romans 12:10) may be avoided, issues to be addressed in the Parish Assembly are such as have been previously brought to the Parish Council for consideration and inclusion on the meeting's agenda.

The procedure in the Parish Assembly shall be that an issue or proposal shall be brought for discussion by the Chair of the meeting, and speakers pro and con shall be given fair opportunity to address their comments to the Chair. The Chair shall listen to ascertain whether a consensus already exists or if one might be developed by continued discussion of the issue or modification of the proposal. He shall poll the Assembly to see if there is unanimity. If there is not, he shall inquire as to what would be required to achieve unanimity or, failing that, whether the minority is willing to concede to the majority in Christian love. If they are not, the opposite question may be addressed. If unanimity is unattainable, concession will not be made, and the parties will not continue the discussion, the matter shall be tabled until the next meeting of the Parish Assembly. If the same situation pertains at that meeting, the matter may be directed to the Voters' Assembly or again reserved for the next meeting of the Parish Assembly, per the will of said assembly.

Requirements of and Procedure for the Voters' Assembly

While the Parish Assembly shall be the normal venue for matters warranting formal input or a decision beyond that of the Parish Council, if a matter of urgency is unable to be resolved through the Parish Assembly it may be referred to the Voters' Assembly. (In all articles that indicate that something requires the action of the Parish assembly, it shall be understood that the Voters' Assembly shall have fulfilled that requirement in anything referred to it.) The Voters' Assembly shall consist of the male adult communicant members of the parish who have been in regular attendance and are not under church discipline.

A vote should not be considered an act of authority, but an act of service by which each voter acts according to the New Man (Ephesians 4:24) and does what is best for his neighbor. Our experience,

however, agrees with God's Word given through St. Paul ("nothing good dwells in...my flesh"; Romans 7:18), so that the following measures will be enacted to prevent the contradiction of God's Word and the rule of Christian love (Galatians 5:13, 1 Peter 1:22, 1 John 3:16):

- A) In accord with 1 Timothy 2:12–15, only male communicant members of the age of legal majority (1 Peter 5:5) shall be voting members;
- B) Those absent from the Divine Service in our parish for a period of thirty days or more without other arrangements being made with our Pastor(s) for Pastoral care (or who are under church discipline) shall be ineligible to vote;
- C) The conduct of all meetings of the Voters' Assembly shall be governed by the Word of God, the Lutheran Confessions, our Constitution, and Robert's Rules of Order, the authority of each weighted in that order.

The Pastoral Office

God instituted the Office of the Ministry for the preaching of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments, through which means He gives the Holy Spirit, who creates faith in those who hear the Gospel (Augsburg Confession V, John 20:22-23, Romans 10:13-15). While, as a parish, we care for the Pastor's earthly needs, he is not an 'employee' of the parish in the secular sense. Rather, God, working through the parish, calls men to serve as ministers in His Church (Acts 20:28). Those holding the Office of the Ministry are accountable to God for their stewardship of the 'Power of the Keys', which they exercise publicly in behalf of God's people (John 20:23, Hebrews 13:17, 1 Corinthians 4:1-4).

In accord with the terminology of the Church of the Reformation in its period of orthodoxy, called Pastors of this parish may occupy the positions of Presbyter (sole Pastor of the parish), Bishop (supervisory Pastor to other Pastors), or Deacon (Pastor who serves under the Bishop). Such shall be called by God through the parish as set forth below, and ordained to the Office of the Ministry according to the usual order of the Church. Our Pastors shall be expected to be readily available for private Confession and Absolution and to lend Pastoral counsel whenever needed or desired, and shall preach, teach, and administer the Sacraments in accord with Article II of our parish Constitution. When God's servant speaks God's Word, it is to be understood as being as valid and certain as if Christ our Lord stood before us and spoke it; thus, nothing shall be adopted by the parish that in any way limits our Pastors from teaching and practicing in accord with God's Word and the Lutheran Confessions, or that sets such teaching and practice as merely one option among others. At the same time, no Pastor is allowed to demand what is not indicated in Scripture and the Confessions as if such were ordained of God (Jeremiah 23:25–32, Ezekiel 34:1–10).

Procedure for the Divine Call of Pastors

Potential candidates for the Pastoral office (whether as Presbyter/Bishop or Deacon) may be proposed by any member of the parish. After consideration by the Parish Council (see Handbook for the Parish Council) and consultation with such called and ordained Pastors as adhere fully to Article II of the Constitution of this parish (see Titus 1:5), the candidates for the office of Pastor shall be proposed at the next meeting of the Parish Assembly. After open discussion of each nominee, a list will be compiled of any candidate(s) that are approved by unanimous consensus of the Parish Assembly. If more than one is on that list, then, following the example of the Apostles (Acts 1:15-26) and recognizing that a faithful Pastor is a gift from the risen Christ (Ephesians 4:11-13), a prayer shall be offered that the Lord of the Harvest would bless the calling of a new Pastor and the name of one of the

approved candidates shall be selected ‘by lot’. The Divine Call shall then be extended to that candidate with thanksgiving to God. If God has deemed that the approved candidate is to remain where he has already been called or to accept another call, then the approved list of candidates will be revisited at the next called meeting according to the aforementioned procedure.

Küster

Following the 1581 church order for Hoya, Germany, we adopt the office of *Küster*. A man who occupies this office is prepared to lead the parish (when the Pastor is ill or away) in the recitation of the Catechism (which he shall commit to memory), as well as to lead in congregational singing. He assists the Pastor in Baptisms, burials, and admitting and excluding people from the Lord’s Supper, as well as making sure that the church is clean and prepared for all services. He shall, therefore, neither absent himself from the Lord’s Supper nor set himself against the Pastor, but shall seek to assist him in all things. As this office includes the leading of the parish when the Pastor is not available for the regular Divine Service, a candidate for it should meet the same requirements (minus the extended training and ordination) as one would expect to be found in a candidate for the ordained Office of Deacon (1 Timothy 3:8–13).

Selection of a Küster shall be done as follows. The Parish Council shall seek to establish whether anyone is particularly thought of by the parish as a candidate for this office. After reviewing those who have been suggested and establishing for whom a consensus already exists, the Parish Council shall present any such individuals to the parish for comment for a period of 30 days, after which they shall present such name(s) as they consider appropriate to the Parish assembly, the unanimous declaration of which shall be necessary to ratify appointment to this office. The term of service for a Küster shall endure until death, disability, or departure from the parish prevents him from serving.

Handbook for the Parish Council Holy Trinity Evangelical-Lutheran Church of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession

Approved by the Parish Assembly on 13 July 2008

Disciplinary Procedures

Our Lord and Savior died for us all so that we would have redemption and everlasting life through the Word of His grace. As a Christian family, we are charged to love one another and care for one another's spiritual welfare. It is, therefore, important that if one of God's sheep stray from the flock, we make every effort to bring Christ's blood-bought sheep back to the fold, as God would have us do. To that end, we must, if necessary, also discipline that member who is confessing or acting contrary to God's Word, out of Christian love for that person and for any who might be led astray.

Members

When members purposefully and willfully conduct their lives in clear and manifest disobedience to God's Word, such will be admonished according to the words of our Lord in Matthew 18:15-20. If they refuse to repent and amend their sinful life after such proper admonition, they shall be excommunicated by the Pastor(s) with the unanimous approval of the Parish Assembly at the meeting called for this purpose.

Specifically regarding the despising of the Gospel and Sacraments, the Pastor and Parish Council members will visit anyone who absents himself from the Divine Service for no known and legitimate reason, that his welfare might be determined and, as necessary, he might be admonished and encouraged to attend the Divine Service and receive Holy Communion, or, if that is not possible for the member, to set up an appointment with the Pastor to receive the Gospel and Sacrament privately. If such a member continues in nonattendance, at least two representatives of the Parish Council will call on that member officially to encourage him back into Christian fellowship. If this behavior continues, the member will be considered to have excluded himself from the parish and will be notified of such by the Pastor and Parish Council by official letter, which shall be recorded in the church's files.

If a member has not been in attendance for a period of six months and contact has not been able to be established during that time by the Parish Council, Pastor, or other members of the parish, he will be removed from the membership of the parish and reported at the next meeting of the Parish Assembly by the Pastor and Parish Council, and recorded in the church's files.

Office Holders

Any office holder of this parish who has acted in a way that violates the trust of the parish, or has created an offense that makes his continuance in office unacceptable to the parish, or who consistently and willfully fails to perform the duties of his office (as determined by his peers and the Pastor) for a period of no more than three months, will be encouraged to resign. If he fails to do so, he shall be removed and his removal reported to the next meeting of the Parish Assembly.

Pastors

If charges of persistent adherence to false doctrine, a scandalous or immoral life, or continued willful neglect or refusal to exercise properly the “Power of the Keys” entrusted to the Pastoral office are made against a Pastor of this parish, the Parish Council shall carefully investigate the matter on the basis of God’s Word, securing the counsel of faithful Pastors known to them and the appropriate officers of any body in which the parish holds membership as necessary to ensure that doctrinal matters are considered in accordance with God’s Word and the Lutheran Confessions, and to ensure that all proceedings are carried out in a manner befitting the honor due the Office of the Holy Ministry and Christian charity. Should the charges prove actionable by clear evidence, the Pastor will be given the opportunity to repent; if he refuses, he shall be given the opportunity to resign. If he refuses, the Parish Council will have no choice but to call a meeting of the Parish Assembly to consider his removal. A unanimous consensus of the Parish Assembly or a three-quarters majority vote of the Voters’ Assembly will be required for removal.

During a Call Process

A list of questions shall be developed (and appended here), which are to be asked of potential candidates for the Pastoral office, including:

1. If affiliated with any body with which the parish is not affiliated, whether he would be willing to leave such affiliation.

Care of Self, Family, Parishioners, and Pastor

Each Parish Council member shall:

- a) Faithfully continue in the study of the Word of God and in prayer for all the members of the parish, for the Pastor and his family, and for God’s blessing and guidance for himself and his own family, as well, as he seeks to glorify God and serve God’s people.
- b) Not allow the care of others to compromise his caring for his family. As it is required of the Pastor to take care of his own family if he is to take care of God’s household, 1 Timothy 3:4–5, so it is required of every Christian man to take care of his family: “But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel,” 1 Timothy 5:8. Each Parish Council member, therefore, must take care of himself spiritually and physically both as honoring God individually (1 Corinthians 6:19), and as his love for God is lived out in his several vocations, especially in his care for spouse and family.
- c) Strive to keep aware of those who are sick, hospitalized, or shut-in, to visit them when able, and to make sure that the Pastor and other members of the Parish Council are also informed so that they can visit and pray for such members.
- d) Stand ready to apply the Word of God, the Lutheran Confessions, and the Constitution of this parish to such situations as may arise with the parishioners, the Pastor, and one another, giving aid, as necessary, in their personal trials and in their attempts to help others.
- e) Keep in contact especially with those parishioners to whom he has been assigned, that such a relationship may be maintained with them that if their spiritual (or physical) life should begin to suffer, he would be able to know it and bring the guidance and assurance of God’s Word in a timely manner.

Handbook for the Treasurer and Financial Secretary Holy Trinity Evangelical-Lutheran Church of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession

Approved by the Parish Assembly on 13 July 2008

Treasurer

The Treasurer shall present a written (and duplicated) financial report for all Parish Council meetings. The Treasurer shall be responsible for accurate recording of congregational receipts and disbursements and anticipated and actual expenditures according to proper accounting procedures:

- a) Shall present a written, duplicated financial report at scheduled meetings of the Parish Assembly; submit permanent financial records for financial review; be responsible for monthly remittance of offerings for missions and Church agencies and for prompt payment of salaries and bills authorized by the congregation and/or the Parish Council, coordinate the flow of monies from the treasury to any appointed committees in such a way that an adequate balance is retained for the payment of salaries and other regularly recurring expenses;
- b) Shall receive from the financial secretary a report of all monies received and duly record same;
- c) Shall have available for any committees a current record of their accrued disbursements and spending guide allotment;
- d) Shall, together with the Parish Council, prepare a spending guide for presentation at the annual meeting of the Parish Assembly.

Financial Secretary

The Financial Secretary and Assistant Financial Secretary(-ies) shall be responsible for the accurate counting, recording, and deposit of all receipts for the parish in an approved financial institution. The Financial Secretary shall furnish the Treasurer with a duplicate of all deposit slips, and shall be responsible for the requisition and distribution of offering envelopes, and preparing and distributing to each member an annual statement of contributions received from that member, suitable for tax purposes.

Bonding

For the protection of their reputations, the Treasurer and Financial Secretary shall be bonded by the congregation's insurer.