

**CONSTITUTION  
OF  
HEBRON EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH  
HEBRON, KENTUCKY  
October 4, 2011**

**PREAMBLE**

We, as baptized members of the Church of Christ, partners in the Priesthood of all believers responding in faith to the call of the Holy Spirit through the Gospel, desiring to unite faithfully to preach the Word, administer the Sacraments and carry out God's mission for us to "Go and make disciples of all nations," do hereby covenant with our gracious God and with one another to abide by this Constitution and to be governed by its provisions. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

**Chapter 1. NAME AND INCORPORATION**

**C1.01** The name of this congregation shall be Hebron Evangelical Lutheran Church. It shall herein be referred to as "HLC" the official abbreviation for Hebron Evangelical Lutheran Church.

**C1.02** For the purpose of this constitution and the accompanying bylaws, the congregation Hebron Evangelical Lutheran Church is hereinafter designated as "this congregation." This congregation shall be incorporated under the laws of the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

**Chapter 2. CONFESSION OF FAITH**

**C2.01** We believe, teach and confess the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

**C2.02** We believe, teach and confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and the Gospel as the power of God for the salvation of all who believe in Him.

A. Jesus Christ is the Word of God incarnate, through whom everything was made and through whose life, death, and resurrection God fashions a redeemed community of disciples to work for God's kingdom and 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, 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, through whom God was pleased to reconcile all things to Himself.

- C. The canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the written Word of God, the sole authoritative source and norm of our proclamation, faith, life and practice.
- C2.03** We believe, teach and confess the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds as true declarations of the Scriptural faith.
- C2.04** 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.
- C2.05** We further believe, teach and confess 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 expositions of the Holy Scriptures to be studied, maintained and followed.
- C2.06** We believe sinners are made right with God by grace alone through faith alone on account of Christ alone. This is the article of faith by which the Church and this congregation stand or fall.<sup>1</sup>
- C2.07** We believe the Word of God is Jesus Christ<sup>2</sup>, the proclamation of Him<sup>3</sup>, and the Holy Scriptures.<sup>4</sup> This Word functions as both Law and Gospel, which need to be distinguished, but not separated. The law orders society and convicts us of sin, showing us our need for a Savior.<sup>5</sup> The Gospel is the power of God that liberates us from sin, death, and the power of the devil, and brings us, by grace, from death to life.<sup>6</sup>
- C2.08** We believe Christ commanded that His Word be proclaimed.<sup>7</sup> Through it, the Holy Spirit works faith when and where the Spirit pleases<sup>8</sup> and repentant sinners are given salvation. Christians live out their earthly lives as totally justified and totally sinful.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Augsburg Confession; *Smalcald*, Part II, Article 1: "Nothing in this article can be given up or compromised."

<sup>2</sup> John 1:1, 14

<sup>3</sup> Matthew 18:20; I John 1:1, 2

<sup>4</sup> II Timothy 3:16

<sup>5</sup> *Smalcald*, Part III, Article II. The Law

<sup>6</sup> Romans 1:16

<sup>7</sup> Luke 24:46-47

<sup>8</sup> Romans 10:17; *Augsburg Confession* V; *Small Catechism* Part II, Third Article.

<sup>9</sup> *Smalcald*, Part III, Article III. Penitence.

**C2.09** We further believe the Church is the assembly of believers among whom the Gospel is taught purely and the sacraments are administered rightly. It is not necessary that human traditions, rites and ceremonies, styles of music or instrumentation in worship, instituted by human beings, should be alike everywhere and always. These can be changed and adapted from time to time to better minister to believers and unbelievers.<sup>10</sup> God instituted one office of ministry through which the means of salvation are provided.<sup>11</sup> For the sake of good order, pastors are authorized to function in this public office by virtue of a congregation's call<sup>12</sup> to develop disciples of Christ and equip them for their personal ministry in and beyond the congregation, so that people and pastor(s) together work to fulfill Christ's Great Commission to "Go and make disciples of all nations..."<sup>13</sup> Churches band together in fellowship and mission to strengthen their ministries, acknowledging participation in the universal Church of our Lord.<sup>14</sup>

### **Chapter 3. NATURE OF THE CHURCH**

**C3.01** All power in the Church belongs to our Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>15</sup> All actions of this congregation are to be carried out under His rule and authority, to carry out His Great Commission to "Go and make disciples of all nations..."<sup>13</sup>

**C3.02** The Church exists both as a universal fellowship and as local congregations gathered around God's Word and Sacraments. Congregations find their fulfillment in the body of Christ, which is the universal community of the Church, and the universal Church exists in and through congregations.

### **Chapter 4. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

**C4.01** The Church is a people created by God in Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit, a team of disciples who are called, gifted, equipped and sent to bear witness to God's creative, redeeming, and sanctifying activity in the world and to make disciples of Jesus Christ.

**C4.02** To participate in God's mission, this congregation as a part of the whole Christian Church, shall:

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<sup>10</sup>*Augsburg Confession Smalcald* Part III, Article XII

<sup>11</sup>Augsburg Confession

<sup>12</sup>Augsburg Confession

<sup>13</sup>Matthew 28.18-20

<sup>14</sup>Ephesians 4:4-6

<sup>15</sup>Colossians 1:18

- A. Worship God in pure proclamation of the Gospel and administration of the sacraments in accordance with the Gospel, 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 Scriptures, preserving and transmitting the Gospel faithfully to future generations.
- C. Carry out Christ's Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20) by reaching out to all people with the Gospel of Jesus Christ to bring them to faith, to disciple them to follow Christ, so that they go and make disciples for Christ, through their own serving and witnessing.
- D. Challenge, equip, and support its members to grow in the characteristics of Christ's Disciples, also called The Marks of Discipleship, as reflected in Acts 2:42-47. By so doing, this congregation shall teach and encourage its members to grow in knowledge of, relationship with and action for God, so its members grow in faith, hope and love, and so they radiate and demonstrate Christ-like character in daily life as the primary setting for the exercise of their Christian calling.

Specifically:

- 1. Praying continuously
  - 2. Vibrant worship centered in receiving Christ in the Sacrament of Holy Communion
  - 3. Studying God's Word individually and with others
  - 4. Fellowshiping & forming spiritual relationships with other disciples in spiritual friendships, mentoring, small groups and other ways
  - 5. Giving as God gives - generously, steadily, and joyously
  - 6. Selflessly serving others in and beyond the church in ways that fit their individual Spiritual gifts, their heart's passion, their abilities, their personalities and their experience
  - 7. Sharing the faith in words as well as actions, inviting others to know and follow Christ, witnessing to the reconciling Word of God and reaching out to all people
- E. Manifest the invisible unity of faith given to the people of God by living together in the love of Christ and by joining with other Christians in prayer, praise and service.
  - F. Provide pastoral care and assist all members to participate in this ministry.
  - G. Respond to human need, work for justice and peace, care for the sick and the suffering, and participate responsibly in society.

- H. Motivate its members to provide financial support for the congregation's ministry and the ministry of the one Christian Church.
- I. Foster and participate in interdependent relationships with other congregations of the one Christian Church.

## **Chapter 5. POWERS OF THE CONGREGATION**

- C5.01** The powers of this congregation are vested in the congregational meeting called and conducted with prayer as provided in this constitution and bylaws.
- C5.02** A quorum for any legally called meeting of the congregation shall be fifty (50) voting members. No vote will be conducted without a quorum.
- C5.03** Notices of all meetings of this congregation shall be given at the services of worship on the preceding two consecutive Sundays and by mail to all voting members at least ten (10) days in advance of the date of the meeting.
- C5.04** The annual meeting of this congregation shall be held at a time specified in the bylaws.
- C5.05** This congregation shall vote by simple majority at the annual meeting to approve the annual budget as presented by the HLC Council.
- C5.06** The powers of this congregation are to elect the HLC Council by simple majority vote, and require them to carry out their duties in accordance with the constitution, bylaws and continuing resolutions.
- C5.07** The authority to call or terminate a pastor shall be with the congregation, and shall be accomplished by at least a two-thirds majority vote of members present at a legally called congregation meeting with proper notice as provided in this constitution and bylaws.
- C5.08** This congregation shall from time to time develop a purpose statement which shall concisely state our purpose; so everyone can easily understand, learn and proclaim it. The purpose statement shall be amended and adopted by the congregation.
- C5.09** A special meeting of the congregation may be called by the HLC Council, or by the HLC Senior Pastor, or by petition of a sufficient number of voting members, as stipulated in the bylaws. The call for each special meeting shall specify the purpose(s) for which it is to be held, and no other business shall be transacted.

## **Chapter 6. CHURCH AFFILIATION**

- C6.01** This congregation shall be a member of the Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (hereinafter "LCMC").

- C6.02** This congregation accepts the Statement of Faith of LCMC and shall preach, teach and confess in accordance with its most current version.
- C6.03** This congregation may join another Lutheran governing body as is helpful and effective in carrying out its purpose and especially in fulfilling the Great Commission from Christ to make disciples of all nations. Membership can be accomplished by two-thirds majority of votes of the congregation cast in two legally called congregational meetings at least 30 days apart.
- C6.04** Affiliation with the LCMC may be terminated as follows:
- A. This congregation takes action to dissolve.
  - B. This congregation ceases to exist.
  - C. A resolution indicating the desire of this congregation to terminate its relationship must be presented and adopted at two legally called congregational meetings. The resolution must pass a vote by two-thirds majority of members present and voting at each meeting. After such a vote, a letter reporting such vote will be sent to the LCMC main office.

## **Chapter 7. THE PASTOR(S)**

- C7.01** Consistent with the faith and practice of this congregation as proclaimed in this constitution,
- A. Every pastor shall:
    - 1) Preach the Gospel in accordance with the Word of God and the Lutheran Confessions
    - 2) Administer the sacraments; Baptism and Holy Communion
    - 3) Agree with and abide by the Statement of Purpose, Statement of Faith, and Ministry Standards of LCMC in accordance with its most current version
    - 4) Conduct the regular worship services of this congregation
    - 5) Perform such other duties as recorded in a Letter of Call
    - 6) Instruct, disciple and equip people for their personal ministry
    - 7) Confirm its members in the faith
    - 8) Visit the sick and counsel the distressed
    - 9) Conduct weddings
    - 10) Conduct funeral services
    - 11) Teach and disciple members and leaders of the congregation, as well as counsel, guide and support all schools and learning organizations of this congregation
    - 12) Install elected members of the HLC Council

- 13) With the HLC council, administer discipline as set forth in this constitution and the bylaws
- 14) Guide and assist the congregation to fulfill the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20) "to go and make disciples of all nations"
- 15) Seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel
- 16) Impart knowledge of the one, true Church and its ministry throughout the world
- 17) Encourage Biblical stewardship in support of faithful Christian missions and ministries both locally and globally
- 18) Be responsible for the supervision of the salaried lay employees of this congregation

**C7.02** The specific duties of the pastor(s), compensation, and other matters pertaining to the service of the pastor(s) shall be included in a Letter of Call.

A. The call of this congregation, when accepted by a pastor, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment, but may be terminated for the following reasons:

- 1) Mutual agreement to terminate the call or the completion of a call for a specific term
- 2) Resignation of the pastor, which shall become effective, unless otherwise agreed, 30 days after the date on which it was submitted
- 3) The incapacity of the pastor (See C7.03)
- 4) Disqualification of the pastor through discipline on grounds of doctrine, morality, or continued neglect of duty (See C7.03)
- 5) The dissolution of the congregation

**C7.03** If an official written, signed and dated recital of allegations of physical or mental incapacity of a pastor or ineffective conduct of the pastoral office, immorality or doctrinal deviation have been brought before the HLC Council, or in a petition signed by at least one-third of the voting members of this congregation, the HLC Council shall investigate. If the HLC Council determines that additional investigation is warranted such investigation will be conducted in company with an ordained LCMC minister and an LCMC layperson who are not members of this congregation, and who shall be selected by the HLC Council.

**C7.04** In case of alleged physical or mental incapacity, competent independent medical testimony may be obtained. When such disability is declared by competent independent medical evidence, the HLC Council shall declare the pastorate vacant. Upon the restoration of a disabled pastor to health, the HLC Council may take steps to enable the pastor to resume the ministry in this congregation.

**C7.05** If the Pastor is not cooperative with an independent medical examination, the pastorate shall be declared vacant.

- C7.06** In the incapacity of a pastor, the HLC Council shall make arrangements for the fulfilling of pastoral duties with an interim pastor, term-called pastor, or HLC lay-leader.
- C.707** Termination of the pastor shall occur by an established quorum and a two-thirds majority vote of the voting members present and voting at a legally called and conducted meeting of the congregation.
- C7.08** An interim or term-called pastor shall have the rights and duties in the congregation of a regularly called pastor. The interim pastor or term-called pastor shall refrain from exerting influence in the selection of a pastor.
- C7.09** This congregation shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to a pastor. A pastor shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to this congregation within 30 days of termination of call, or such other term as mutually agreed upon by the pastor and the HLC Council.
- C7.10** The HLC Council may choose to call an interim pastor. Details of such call shall be in writing, setting forth the purpose and conditions involved. Prior to the completion of a term, the HLC Council President and the HR Committee shall meet with the pastor for a review of the call. Such a call may also be terminated before its expiration in accordance with the provisions outlined above. A term greater than 12 months requires approval of the congregation which shall occur at a legally called and conducted meeting with an established quorum and a two-thirds majority vote of the voting members present.
- C7.11** The HLC Council may choose to call a term-called pastor. Details of such call shall be in writing setting forth the purpose and conditions involved. Prior to the completion of a term, the HLC Council President and the HR Committee shall meet with the pastor for a review of the call. Such a call may also be terminated before its expiration in accordance with the provisions outlined above. A term greater than 12 months requires a legally called congregation meeting and a vote with at least a two-thirds majority vote of members present.
- C7.12** The pastor(s) of this congregation shall become a member of this congregation upon receipt and acceptance of the Letter of Call.
- C7.13** The pastor (or senior pastor, if this congregations calls more than one pastor) of this congregation shall supervise the keeping of accurate parochial records of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages, deaths, communicants, members received, members dismissed, or members excluded from the congregation.



- C7.14** The parochial records of this congregation shall remain the property of the congregation. The secretary of this congregation shall attest in writing to the congregation that such records have been placed in his or her possession in good order whenever the pastor responsible for supervising the keeping of these records departs.
- C7.15** The senior pastor of this congregation shall be an *ex officio* member of all committees and boards of the congregation. Other pastor(s) of this congregation shall be *ex officio* members of all committees and boards of their specific area of service as stipulated in their letter of call.
- C7.16** The senior pastor shall serve *ex officio* on all call committees for other pastoral positions than senior pastor. No other pastors including interim, term-called, or associate pastors shall influence the selection of any pastor of this congregation.

## **Chapter 8. PROPERTY OWNERSHIP**

- C8.01** Ownership of all congregation properties shall remain with the congregation. If this congregation ceases to exist, the property and assets shall be sold and debts retired. If there are assets, funds or property remaining, they shall be given away to a Christian church or a Christian non-profit organization to honor the cause of Christ. Cessation of HLC shall occur by a two-thirds majority vote of the voting members present and voting at a legally called and conducted meeting of the congregation. No vote will be conducted without a quorum.
- C8.02** The HLC Council may purchase or dispose of any or all real business property or personal property not in excess of five percent (5%) of the current year's budget.
- C8.03** The congregation shall act in a legally called and conducted congregational meeting to purchase or dispose of any or all real property or business personal property in excess of five percent (5%) of the current year's budget by a two-thirds majority of votes of the congregation cast in a legally called congregational meeting. No vote will be conducted without a quorum.

## **Chapter 9. BYLAWS**

- C9.01** This congregation may adopt bylaws.
- C9.02** Bylaws may be amended at any legally called meeting of the congregation by a simple majority vote of those present and voting.
- C9.03** No bylaw may conflict with this constitution. If any bylaw is deemed in conflict with this constitution, such a bylaw shall be void and have no effect.

**C9.04** Changes to the bylaws may be proposed by any voting member, provided that such additions or amendments are submitted in writing to the HLC Council at least sixty (60) days before a regular congregational or special congregational meeting called for that purpose. The HLC Council shall notify the congregation of the proposal with their recommendation at least thirty (30) days in advance of the congregational meeting.

## **Chapter 10. AMENDMENTS**

**C10.01** Amendments to this Constitution may be proposed by the HLC Council or by a petition signed by at least fifty (50) voting members. Proposals must be submitted in writing to the HLC Council sixty (60) days before formal consideration by the congregation at a regular congregational meeting or special congregational meeting called for that purpose. The HLC Council shall notify the members of the congregation with their recommendations at least thirty (30) days in advance of the meeting.

**C10.02** A proposed amendment to this constitution:

- A. Shall be approved as proposed if it receives a two-thirds majority vote of those present and voting at a properly called congregational meeting
- B. If the proposed amendment fails to be approved the amendment cannot be submitted for a vote at a legally called congregational meeting for at least one year after the proposed amendment was voted down, at a legally called congregational meeting, unless the proposed amendment has been substantively changed.

## **Chapter 11. CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS**

**C11.01** The HLC Council may enact continuing resolutions which describe the functions of this congregation.

**C11.02** Continuing resolutions shall be enacted or amended by a two-thirds vote of all voting members of the HLC Council.

**C11.03** Such continuing resolutions must be adopted by the congregation at the next regular meeting of the congregation. Where upon they should be included under the Continuing Resolutions of the Bylaws and become subject to change.

**C.11.04** The resolution shall have an effective date and the date shall be recorded in the resolution and noted in the Constitution.