



# **CONSTITUTION AND BY- LAWS OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN GUYANA**

**(Adopted at its 38<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention 6<sup>th</sup> May, 1981 and as amended by the 58<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention: 13 –15 May 2001, the 65<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention: 04 – 06 May 2008 and the Special Convention: 12 September 2009)**

Note: All amendments approved by the 65<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention: 04 – 06 May 2008 and Special Convention of September 12, 2009 are underlined and in bold.

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## **ARTICLE I - INCORPORATION AND SEAL**

- Section 1. The name of this Church shall be the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Guyana.
- Section 2. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Guyana shall remain incorporated as the successor corporation to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the then British Guiana, now Guyana.
- Section 3. For the purposes of this constitution and the accompanying By-Laws, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Guyana is hereinafter referred to as "this Church".
- Section 4. The seal of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Guyana presents the symbol of the Cross in the avellan style containing an oval emblem showing the Swan atop the open Bible on whose pages appears the inscription, "Biblia Sacra". The entire symbol is encircled by a band on which is written "Lutheran Church in Guyana, Founded 1743".
- Section 5. The President of this Church shall have the custody of the seal.

## **ARTICLE II - CONFESSION OF FAITH**

- Section 1. This Church confesses Jesus Christ as Lord of the Church. The Holy Spirit creates and sustains the Church through the Gospel and thereby unites believers with their Lord and with one another in the fellowship of faith.
- Section 2. This Church holds that the Gospel as the revelation of God's sovereign will and saving grace in Jesus Christ. In Him, the Word Incarnate, God imparts Himself to all people.
- Section 3. This Church acknowledges the Holy Scriptures as the norm for the faith and life of the Church. The Holy Scriptures is the divinely inspired record of God's redemptive act in Christ, for which the Old Testament prepared the way and which the New Testament proclaims. In the continuation of this proclamation in the Church, God still speaks through the Holy Scriptures and realizes His redemptive purpose generation after generation.
- Section 4. This Church accepts the Apostles', the Nicene, and the Athanasian creeds as true declarations of the faith of the Church.
- Section 5. This Church accepts the Unaltered Augsburg Confession and Luther's Small Catechism as true witnesses to the Gospel, and

acknowledges as one with it in faith and doctrine all Churches that likewise accept the teachings of these symbols.

Section 6. This Church accepts the other symbolical books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, the Apology of the Augsburg confession, the Smalcald articles, Luther's Large Catechism, and the Formula of Concord as further valid interpretations of the Confession of the Church.

Section 7. This Church affirms that the Gospel transmitted by the Holy Scriptures, to which the creeds and confessions bear witness, is the true treasure of the Church, the substance of its proclamation, and the basis of its unity and continuity. The Holy Spirit uses the proclamation of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments to create and sustain Christian faith and fellowship. As this occurs, the Church fulfills its divine mission and purpose.

### **ARTICLE III – THE NATURE OF THE CHURCH**

Section 1. All power in the Church belongs to our Lord Jesus Christ, its Head. All actions of this Church are to be carried out under His rule and authority.

Section 2. 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. This Church, 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 this our day.

### **ARTICLE IV – OBJECTS AND POWERS**

Section 1. This Church lives to be the instrument of the Holy Spirit in obedience to the commission of its Lord, and specifically:

- (a) To proclaim the Gospel through Word and Sacraments; to relate that Gospel to people's need in every situation; and to extend the Ministry of the Gospel to all the world.
- (b) To gather into fellowship those who respond in faith to the call of the Gospel, and to nurture them in the faith through that fellowship.

- (c) To affirm its unity in the true faith and to give outward expression to that unity.
- (d) To safeguard the pure preaching of the Word of God and the right administration of the Sacraments in all its congregations in conformity with its Confession of Faith.
- (e) To participate in ecumenical Christian activities, contributing its witness and work and co-operating with other Churches which confess God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Section 2. To achieve these ends, this Church shall:

- (a) Establish, organize, admit, and approve relocation of congregations.
- (b) Train, prepare, call, ordain and receive ministers of the Gospel.
- (c) Be responsible for the discipline of the congregations, Parishes and ministers of this Church.
- (d) Further missions.
- (e) Study contemporary society in the light of the Gospel, and witness to the truth of God in relation thereto.
- (f) Prepare, publish, or otherwise issue study materials setting forth Christian truth and disseminating knowledge concerning the doctrine, practice, history and life of the Lutheran Church.
- (g) Decide all questions of doctrine and life on the basis of the Holy Scriptures in accordance with the Confession of Faith of this Church.
- (h) Establish an Executive Council, Standing Committees, a Ministerium and such other agencies as are deemed appropriate to carry out assigned responsibilities.
- (i) Estimate the financial needs for the support of approved work of this Church, and request, receive and disburse funds for such work.
- (j) Have general oversight and supervision of all congregational, Parish, educational, and other work within the province of the Church.
- (k) Adopt such By-Laws, rules and regulations, as shall establish and preserve good order and discipline.

Section 3. This Church shall be the holding body for all property acquired by purchase, gift, grant, alienation or otherwise. All property rights of this Church shall be vested in the name of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Guyana. The Executive Council shall act for this Church in transactions involving property. The Vice-President and Secretary shall sign all legal documents for this Church **upon the approval of the Executive Council.**

## **ARTICLE V – MEMBERSHIP**

- Section 1. This Church shall consist of all the congregations and ministers of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Guyana.
- Section 2. Additional congregations and ministers may be received into membership in the manner described in this Constitution and its By-Laws.
- Section 3. Congregations and ministers may be removed from the roll in the manner described in the Constitution and By-Laws of this Church.

## **ARTICLE VI – CONGREGATIONS**

- Section 1. A congregation is a manifestation of the Church in a specific locality where the Gospel is rightly preached and the Sacraments rightly administered.
- Section 2. Admission of a congregation into membership shall be by action of this Church. Each congregation shall, in its application for admission into this Church, covenant to abide loyally by the enactments of this Church.
- Section 3. Every congregation shall belong to a Parish.
- Section 4. Congregations shall be represented at conventions of this Church through the Parish in which they are situated.
- Section 5. Congregations of this Church retain authority in all matters that have not been committed to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Guyana in this constitution or by subsequent enactments by this Church.
- Section 6. Congregations shall have the right to petition this Church. Petitions shall be addressed to the Executive Council through the Parish to which the congregation belongs.
- Section 7. All congregations and Parishes shall be governed by this Constitution and its By-Laws.
- Section 8. In cases of strife and division, should any part of a congregation belonging to this Church reject the faith set forth in Article II or refuse to abide by other provisions of this Constitution or by its obligation as a member of this Church, whichever part of the congregation, whether a majority or minority of its membership, which continues in unity with this Church and its faith shall be

recognized as the lawful congregation and shall continue to use all the property assigned for its workshop and organizational activities.

- Section 9. This Church may declare a member congregation defunct if such congregation has disbanded or ceased to function in accordance with any of the teachings of this Church, its Constitution, By-Laws and enactments. In such case, or if a congregation departs from membership in this Church without the consent of this Church, all property of the congregation, real, personal and mixed, shall remain vested in this Church, its successors or assigns.

## **ARTICLE VII – MINISTERS**

- Section 1. The term “ministers” in this Constitution shall be interpreted to be all ordained Pastors in the active full-time service of this Church and includes missionary Pastors and retired Pastors.
- Section 2. This Church shall define the standards of acceptance into and continuance in its ministry.
- Section 3. Ordination and reception of ministers shall be a function of this Church. Each candidate or applicant for ordination or for reception shall be examined by the Executive Council of this Church prior to taking a decision on ordination or reception.
- Section 4. Upon ordination and reception of a minister his /her name shall be placed on the ministerial roll and his/her name shall be removed from the ministerial roll upon resignation or dismissal or death or transfer.
- Section 5. **(a)** Every minister shall preach the Word, administer the Sacraments, and conduct public workshop consistent with the faith and practices of this Church, and shall lead a life befitting the holy office. The Minister shall care for the people individually and as a congregation, give catechetical instruction, confirm, perform marriages in accordance with the laws of God and this country, visit the sick and distressed, and bury the dead. The Minister shall endeavour to bring into the congregation/s those outside the Church. The Minister shall inculcate piety in individual and family life and supervise all schools and auxiliary organizations of the congregations of the Parish. The Minister shall install regularly elected members of the Church Council, and, with the Council, administer discipline. The Minister shall seek out and encourage qualified young people to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel and strive to extend the Kingdom of God in the community, throughout the land and abroad. The Minister shall impart knowledge of the Church and its wider ministry through distribution of its periodicals and other publications,

and shall endeavour to increase the liberality of the congregation/s in support of their work and the work of this Church.

- (b) **The Minister shall serve as ex-officio to the Parish and Chief Executive Officer of the Parish Council and Parish in consultation with, and active participation of the officers and members of the Parish Council.**

Section 6. No person who belongs to any organization which is anti-christian or which claims to possess in its teachings and ceremonies that which the Lord has given solely to his Church, or which requires of its members a pledge of secrecy, shall be ordained or otherwise received into the Ministry of this Church, nor shall any person so ordained or received by this Church be retained in its ministry if he subsequently joins such an organization, or if it is subsequently known that anyone ordained belonged to such a organization.

Section 7. (a) Each minister of this Church shall be in possession of a call both from this Church and a Parish of this Church.

- (b) **The Parish Call of a Minister shall be for a term of four years and subject to a renewal of the parish call for each subsequent term of four years, unless recalled earlier, in keeping with the procedures and requirements set out in the Constitution and By-laws of this church.**

Section 8. Each minister shall be a member of a congregation in the Parish, which he/she serves.

Section 9. Responsibility for discipline of ministers and the imposition of penalties up to and including deposition, recall or termination from the ministerial office is vested in this Church. There shall be an investigating committee appointed by the Executive Council as the need arises. The membership and function shall be as specified by the By-Laws.

Section 10. If it becomes necessary in the interest of the Church, the Executive Council, after consultation with the relevant Parish Council, may terminate the services of a minister after giving not less than three months notice or payment in lieu of such notice.

Section 11. Every minister shall be responsible for accurate parochial records of all baptisms, confirmations, communicants, members received, dismissed, or excluded from the congregation/s of his Parish, or marriages and burials and finances. The Minister shall submit an annual parochial report to the Secretary of this Church three months prior to the annual convention of this Church.



- Section 12. All ministers shall attend all conventions of this Church, **all parish council and congregational/parish council meetings**. In cases of unavoidable absence, the absentee shall submit a reasonable excuse to the Secretary **of this church or parish council as appropriate**. Any minister, who after two warnings, is absent without excuse from further conventions **or parish council/congregational meetings** shall be liable to discipline.

### **ARTICLE VIII – PARISHES**

- Section 1. For the purpose of efficient administration, congregations shall be organized into Parishes. A Parish shall consist of one or more congregations. The number of Parishes and their boundaries shall be determined by the Executive Council of this Church.
- Section 2. Each Parish shall function in keeping with the provisions as set out in this Constitution and the By-Laws.
- Section 3. This Church encourages each Parish to be self-supporting. However, within the limits of funds available this Church may subsidize the work in Parishes according to the needs that exist as this Church deems it necessary.
- Section 4. Each Parish shall submit to the Executive Council for information on its proposed budget for the forthcoming year.
- Section 5. (a) Further to the initial call by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Guyana, any Parish can extend a call to a minister/ministerial candidate of this Church **to serve the parish normally for a term of four years**. (See By-Laws for details of calls).
- (b) The Executive Council in consultation with the Parish **Council** shall appoint the minister for each Parish **after the Parish call has been approved by a duly constituted congregational/joint congregational meeting with a quorum of 40 or one-third of the active members of the Parish, and the Executive Council of this church is so notified by the Chairperson of the parish council.**
- Section 6. Each Parish shall have the right to bring to the attention of the convention of this Church any matter or issue affecting the welfare of this Church.
- Section 7. (a) Each Parish shall be responsible to maintain the property, which this Church has granted it the use of.

- (b) An annual report shall be submitted by each Parish **through its chairperson and secretary** to the Executive Council stating the condition of the property and listing the works of maintenance undertaken and completed thereon for the year.

Section 8. Each Parish shall budget for and support the Church-wide-budget of this Church as adopted by convention.

### **ARTICLE IX – CONVENTION**

Section 1. (a) The convention of this Church shall be its highest legislative authority. The Convention shall:

- be responsible for the Constitution and By-laws;
- give general direction to the work of the Church in line with this Constitution;
- elect the President and members of the Executive Council; and
- act on the report of the President, **the Vice-president**, the Secretary, and the Treasurer.

- (b) All congregations, ministers and other workers, Parishes, officers, the Executive Council, Standing and Special committees, auxiliaries and other agencies of this Church shall be bound by all actions pertaining to them by a convention, and which are in conformity with this constitution.

Section 2. The regular meeting of the convention of this Church shall be held annually at the time and place specified in the By-Laws.

Section 3. Special meetings of the convention may be called by the Executive Council or at the request of one third of the members of convention. Only such matters shall be considered which are related to the designated purpose of the special convention.

Section 4. Notice of the meeting of the regular convention shall be sent by the Secretary to all Parishes three months in advance of the meeting.

Section 5. The convention of this Church shall consist of delegates and Ministers as follows:

- (a) Two elected delegates from each Parish who shall be lay persons, one man and one woman.
- (b) All ministers who are on the ministerial roll of this Church and in a Pastorate **or in a full time ministry of this church.**

- Section 6.(a) The voting body at a special convention shall be those delegates who were elected for the preceding regular convention, provided they have not been disqualified by termination of membership in this Church or its congregations, or superseded by the election of new delegates.
- (b) All Ministers referred to in section 5 (b) of this article.
- Section 7. The following shall be seated as advisory delegates with voice but without vote:
- (a) Non-delegate members of the Executive Council;
- (b) Representatives of the Lutheran World Federation;
- (c) Presidents/Chairpersons of the auxiliaries in connection only with matters pertaining to their auxiliaries.
- Section 8. The voting body at Convention shall consist of the elected delegates from each Parish and the Ministers on the ministerial roll of this Church and in a Pastorate **or in a full time ministry of this church.**
- Section 9. One half of the number of Ministers on the ministerial roll and one half of the number of the elected delegates shall constitute a quorum.

## **ARTICLE X – OFFICERS**

- Section 1. The officers of this Church shall be a President, a Vice-President, a Secretary and a Treasurer.
- (a) The President shall be **a Minister** of this Church. The **Vice-President,** Secretary and Treasurer shall be laypersons in good standing.
- (b) The President, Vice-President, and Secretary shall be elected biennially and serve until the close of the convention at which their successors are elected. Should a vacancy occur **ad interim,** the Executive Council shall fill the vacancy, except that of President, until the next regular meeting of convention, which shall elect a successor to fill the unexpired term. In the event the office of President becomes vacant, the Vice-President shall perform the **non-pastoral** duties of President **until the next regular convention which shall elect a successor to fill the unexpired term. In such situation, the pastoral duties as may be required shall be assigned by the Executive Council to a pastor of this church as it considers appropriate.** Thereafter, in the

event the office of President becomes vacant the Secretary shall chair a meeting of the Executive Council to elect a pro tem President, not necessarily from the membership of the Executive Council, who shall serve until the next regular convention when a President and a Vice-President shall be elected to fill the unexpired terms.

- (c) The President shall be eligible to serve not more than two successive terms.
- (d) The Treasurer of this Church shall normally be appointed biennially, before the annual Convention, by the Executive Council **subject to a confirmation vote of a majority of the voting body of the convention,** and shall serve at the pleasure of Convention or the Executive Council.
- (e) Any other officer of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Guyana and any member of the Executive Council may be relieved from office by a regular Convention, in the best interest of the Church, on a motion moved, seconded, and carried by two-thirds of the members of Convention.
- (f) The officers of this Church shall serve in the same capacity in the Executive Council.

## Section 2.

### Duties of Officers:

#### (a) The President

It shall be the duty of the President:

1. To see to it, **together with the Vice-President and the Executive Council** that the Constitution and By-Laws of this Church are duly observed, and that its enactments in conformity therewith are carried into effect. The President shall have oversight of the offices of Secretary and Treasurer.
2. To visit the congregations of this Church and to confer with them and advise them concerning their spiritual and temporal welfare. He/She shall counsel with the Ministers as their Pastor.
3. To preside at all **opening and closing worship services** of the Convention and to be its Chief **Pastor and resource person**.
4. To appoint all committees and make individual appointments, **as approved by** the Executive Council, unless the Convention or the Executive Council directs otherwise.
5. To sign all official **certificates of this church and letters of appointment of pastors to parishes as approved by the Executive Council.**

6. To be the official correspondent of this Church **and to bring all incoming and outgoing correspondence concerning this church to the attention of the Vice-president and the Executive Council for appropriate action.**
7. To be the **Chief Pastor of this Church.**
8. To be ex officio member of all standing and special committees.
9. To submit a report to each regular meeting of the Convention of this Church concerning its life and all aspects of its work, together with such observations and recommendations affecting this Church as he/she may deem important.
10. **Following the approval of the Executive Council,** to ordain all accepted candidates for the ministerial office and install the Pastors of this Church in their Parishes or other offices or he/she **the Executive Council** shall provide for their ordination and installation.
11. **To be the Chair of the Ministerium to carry out the duties outlined in Article XIII –Section 2 of this Constitution.**
12. **To liaise with the officers of this church to be kept informed on all matters pertaining to their respective offices, and it shall be the duty of the respective officers to keep the President so informed.**

(b) The Vice-President

It shall be the duty of the Vice-President:

1. **To see to it, together with the President and the Executive Council, that the Constitution and By-Laws of this church are duly observed, and that its enactments in conformity therewith, are carried into effect.**
2. **To preside at all meetings of the Executive Council and the business sessions of the Conventions.**
3. **To have oversight of the offices of the Secretary and Treasurer**
4. To act for the President in his/her absence **on all non-pastoral matters or at his/her request.**
5. To perform the **non-pastoral** duties of the President, in case that office for any reason falls vacant, until the next regular Convention. **The Executive Council will appoint a Minister to carry out pastoral acts in such a circumstance.**

6. **To sign, together with the Secretary, all official papers approved by the Executive Council.**
7. **To sign in the name of this church along with the Secretary, and to fix the seal of this church when the execution of transports or other instruments of writing are ordered by this church, or required by this constitution, or become proper and necessary in carrying on the business of the church.**
8. To perform such other duties as may from time to time be assigned to him/her by the Convention or the Executive Council.

(c) The Secretary

It shall be the duty of the Secretary:

1. To prepare and keep the official minutes of the convention and of the Executive Council, as the recording officer of this Church.
2. To have charge of the printing and distribution of the minutes under the direction of the Executive Council.
3. To prepare and keep a correct register of the ministers and other workers of this Church, including their addresses and their service record; also a similar register of the congregations and Parishes of this Church, their alignment and the names of the lay delegates elected to represent them.
4. To classify and arrange all important papers and documents, in consultation with the President, and deposit them in the archives of this Church.
5. To serve as statistician of this Church, secure from the congregation their annual parochial reports, collate the same for his/her annual report to convention.
6. To attest all instruments of writing ordered by this Church or required by the Constitution or necessary in carrying on the business of the corporation and signed and sealed by the President.
7. To serve as assistant correspondent of this Church at the direction of the President.
8. To submit a report to the annual convention of this Church based on the work of the Executive Council, and the annual parochial reports from the various Parishes.
9. To perform such other duties as this Church shall from time to time direct.

(d) The Treasurer

It shall be the duty of the Treasurer:

1. To have charge of all the monies and accounts of this Church, its transports, mortgages, contracts, evidence of claims and revenues, and trust funds, holding the same at all times subject to the order of this Church.
2. To receive, receipt and disburse all funds upon proper authorization.
3. To pay all monies sanctioned by the budget or special accounts, at the direction of the Executive Council, securing proper receipts.
4. To report to the members of the Executive Council at all its regular meetings on financial matters and the state of all finances of the Church, and to submit a half-yearly statement of audit.
5. To render a full, detailed and duly audited report to the annual convention of all receipts and disbursements in the several accounts for the preceding year, together with a tabulation, for record and publication in the minutes, of the contributions for different causes from the several Parishes/congregations. He/She shall also indicate the current financial conditions of this Church and its progress in fulfilling its obligation in becoming a self-supported Church.
6. To submit balance sheets of receipts and expenditures, assets and liabilities when and as required by the Act of Registration and in accordance with the Articles of Incorporation of this Church.
7. To conduct correspondence relating to the budget, its special accounts and other matters restricted to finance.
8. To prepare and submit all financial records for the audit of all accounts.
9. To perform such other duties as may from time to time be assigned to him/her by this Church.

Section 3. The officers shall be entitled to receive the expenses incident to the duties imposed by their respective offices, subject to the limitations and regulations imposed by convention or the Executive Council.

### **ARTICLE XI – EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Section 1 (a) The Executive Council shall consist of nine persons who shall be the four officers of this Church, together with five additional members which members shall be elected biennially by the Convention. The Executive Council shall include four ministers and five lay persons.

The immediate past President, if not a member of the Executive Council, shall be an honorary member of the Executive Council with voice, but no vote.

- (b) The Executive Council may appoint up to three advisers to provide professional competence and expertise to the Executive Council and Standing Committees. They shall have voice, but no vote on the Executive Council

Section 2. (a) **It shall be the duty of Officers and Members of the Executive Council to see to it that the Constitution and By-Laws and policies of this church are duly observed, and that its enactments in conformity therewith, are carried into effect.**

- (b) During the interim between conventions and under the limitations imposed by this Constitution and the By-Laws, the Executive Council shall implement all actions of convention without delay and carry forward the work and policies of this Church and shall act for this Church, subject in all matters to review of its actions by the subsequent convention.

Section 3. The Executive Council shall be the directors of the corporation and exercise trusteeship responsibilities for this Church including such powers as are designated in the Articles of Incorporation.

Section 4 (a) Persons eligible for election to the Executive Council shall be communing members in good standing, and need not be delegates to the convention.

- (b) Upon the nomination by properly convened and duly constituted Parish Councils, nine members of the Executive Councils shall be elected by the Convention of this Church by a majority of the votes cast.

The Convention shall have the right to elect other than those nominated by Parish Councils, and other than those who are the voting body of Convention as specified in the By-laws.

Not more than two members, including officers, shall be elected from any one Parish.

Section 5. The duties and functions of the Executive Council shall be to **uphold the Constitution and By-laws and policies of this church, and specifically to:**

- (a) Plan and co-ordinate the work of this Church.
- (b) Determine the time and place for each convention, call for all reports to convention, prepare the proposed agenda and



programme, making provision for devotional and informative meetings.

- (c) Fix the rates at which travel and other valid expenses shall be paid for attendance at conventions outside this country.
- (d) Be responsible for all property, moveable and immovable, held or otherwise used by this Church, its purchase, sale, use and care, and to examine annually all properties, investments and securities held by this Church.
- (e) Approve plans and estimates for all new buildings, provide supervision for the repair and maintenance of those buildings whose care is not the responsibility of any Parish.
- (f) Study the budget prepared by the Committee on Finance and submit it to the convention for adoption.
- (g) Submit to the congregations or Parishes a request for apportionment.
- (h) Appoint a suitable Treasurer **subject to the confirmation of a majority of the voting body of Convention.**
- (i) .Designate the co-signatories of all cheques.
- (j) Arrange for the annual audit of the Treasurer's accounts and receive and act on the audit report.
- (k) Constitute and re-align as necessary the Parishes of this Church.
- (l) Receive applications for membership from congregations.
- (m) Establish Preaching Points and Sunday Schools on the recommendation of the Committee on **Mission and Evangelism.**
- (n) Select qualified persons for training for the ministry.
- (o) Extend a call, and approve the extending of the Parish call, to qualified persons to serve in the ministry of this Church, and examine or interview candidates for ordination or reception.
- (p) Appoint ministers to Parishes in consultation with the Parishes involved.
- (q) Select and train other categories of workers.
- (r) To have general oversight of all workers, including their appointment, transfer and dismissal.
- (s) Appoint an investigating committee as the need arises.
- (t) Recommend, after consultation with the Committee on Finance and **Stewardship**, to convention the **remuneration** of all employees of this Church.
- (u) To serve as a committee on rules and regulations regarding leave privileges, study privileges and all other special privileges for all workers.
- (v) Supervise the work of all officers and committees, and receive and act on reports and recommendations of the same.
- (w) Consider all official correspondence.
- (x) Distribute Minutes of the Executive Council.

- (y) Counsel, guide and encourage the auxiliaries of this Church.
- (z) Have charge over all publications and appoint the editor(s).
- (aa) Fill vacancies not otherwise provided for and determine the fact of the incapacity of any officer of this Church.
- (bb) Elect biennially the representatives to serve on the boards and committees of organizations and institutions either related to this Church or to which this Church is related.
- (cc) Fulfill all other obligations assigned to it by this Constitution and the convention.
- (dd) When a member of the Executive Council is granted a leave of absence from the Executive Council, the Executive Council has the authority to appoint a qualified person to act for the member on leave until such leave expires.
- (ee) **Officers and members of the Executive Council shall bring to the attention of the Executive Council any correspondence or communication on church matters addressed to him/her for the Council's consideration and action.**

- Section 6. Any proposal necessitating the appropriation of funds outside of the annual budget in the interim between annual conventions shall require not less than six votes of the Executive Council in favour of adoption.
- Section 7. The Executive Council shall have authority to decide matters pertaining to leave, assignments, housing and travel.
- Section 8. If a member of the Executive Council or one of its appointees ceases to be a member in good standing of this Church, or if he/she is absent without reasonable excuse from two successive regular meetings of the committee to which he has been elected or appointed, his/her seat shall at once become vacant.
- Section 9. The Executive Council shall meet at least quarterly. Special meetings may be called by the President **and or the Vice-President**. Special meetings must be called on the request of four members of the Executive Council.
- Section 10. Six members of the Executive Council shall constitute a quorum.

## **ARTICLE XII – STANDING COMMITTEES**

- Section (1) The standing committees of this Church shall be:
- (a) The Committee on Mission and Evangelism;
  - (b) The Committee on Christian Education and Literature;
  - (c) The Committee on Finance and Stewardship;
  - (d) The Committee on Interpretation.

- Section (2). Standing committees shall be for the purpose of study and service in the main areas of interest, life and work of this Church. Decisions of the standing committees shall be subject to the approval of the Executive Council.
- Section 3 (a) The Council shall appoint from among its member, Chairpersons for each Standing Committee. The Treasurer of the Church shall be the Chair of the Committee of Finance and Stewardship.
- (b) Other members of the Standing Committees shall be appointed by the President upon the approval of the Executive Council. The term of office of members of standing committees shall be two years, and members may be eligible to serve more than one term.
- Section 4. The Standing Committees shall meet half-yearly, at the call of the Executive Council, and in conjunction with a regular meeting of the Executive Council. The Standing Committees shall report to the Council, which acts, on all necessary and appropriate recommendations, as specified in the By-laws.
- Section 5. Each standing committee shall submit a comprehensive report of its activities to the President and the Executive Council three months before each regular convention of the Church with such recommendations as it may desire.

### **ARTICLE XIII – MINISTERIUM**

- Section 1. The Ministerium shall be an organization consisting of all ministers of this Church for the purpose of group study and mutual edification.
- Section 2. The Duties of the Ministerium **under the chair of the President** shall be to:
- (a) Study matters pertaining to Pastoral vocation and practice.
  - (b) Plan and carry out special conferences, study groups and refresher courses for **ministers** and laypersons.
  - (c) Bring suggestions to this Church on matters affecting the spiritual life of this Church.
  - (d) Foster fellowship among the ministers by means of common worship, retreats and corporate study.
  - (e) Encourage this Church to strengthen its ecumenical relationships with other Christian **communion** and suggest ways and means to this end.
  - (f) Report on its activities to the President and the Executive Council of this Church two months before each regular convention of this Church.

#### **ARTICLE XIV – AUXILIARIES**

- Section 1. General organizations of men, women, youth and children of this Church formed to further and support its work and for Christian education, edification and fellowship may be organized as official auxiliaries of this Church by vote of the convention.
- Section 2. An official auxiliary shall be regarded as the composite of the congregational auxiliaries.
- Section 3. Each congregational auxiliary shall regard itself as basically a part of a congregation, owing its first loyalty and service to its congregation.
- Section 4. The President of this Church or his/her representative shall have a seat and voice in the conventions of the official auxiliaries and in their Executive bodies.
- Section 5. Each official auxiliary shall present a report of its work to the President and the Executive Council two months before the regular convention of this Church.
- Section 6. The auxiliaries, in consultation with and approval of the Executive Council, may prepare, produce and distribute for their own use, programme materials which are in conformity with the doctrines and principles of his Church.

#### **ARTICLE XV – RELATIONSHIPS**

- Section 1. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Guyana shall maintain and promote close Church-to-Church relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- Section 2. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Guyana shall be a member of the Lutheran World Federation.
- Section 3. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Guyana may establish and maintain ecumenical relations and co-operation with other Christian denominations and may seek and maintain membership with the Guyana Council of Churches, the Caribbean Conference of Churches, and the World Council of Churches, without compromising its conscience and teachings.

#### **ARTICLE XVI – BY-LAWS AND AMENDMENTS**

- Section 1. This Church may adopt By-laws not in conflict with this Constitution. Such By-Laws may be adopted at any convention by a two-thirds

majority of the voting body seated at convention, a quorum being present.

Section 2. Article II "Confession of Faith" of this Constitution shall not be altered nor amended by this Church.

Section 3. Other articles of this Constitution may be amended or revised by a two-thirds majority of the voting members seated at a regular convention, after having been moved and presented in writing over the signatures of at least five members of the voting body at the previous regular convention, or by at least five members of the Executive Council of this Church.

**By- Laws (page 20)**

## BY-LAWS

### SECTION 1 A – CONGREGATIONS

- Item 1. A congregation seeking membership in this Church shall:
- (a) Submit to the President of this Church a formal application, and a statement, certified by the secretary of the congregation on order of a congregational meeting accepting the teachings, authority, Constitution and By-Laws and enactments of this Church.
  - (b) If the application is approved by a majority of the members of the Executive Council, the congregation shall be formally received into the membership of this Church at the next meeting of the convention.
  - (c) After reception it becomes a part of a Parish as directed by the Executive Council.
- Item 2. Each congregation of this Church shall:
- (a) Faithfully proclaim the Word and administer the Sacraments.
  - (b) Hold at least one service of worship on every Lord's Day.
  - (c) Inculcate piety in the individual and family life of its members.
  - (d) Give Christian nurture to the young and educate persons of all ages in the faith confessed by this Church and in godly living.
  - (e) Encourage and stimulate its members in evangelism, works of mercy, and practice of Christian stewardship.
  - (f) Provide for the material needs of its Pastor.
  - (g) Strive to contribute systematically at least its proportionate share of the funds needed for the life and work of this Church as indicated in its budget.
  - (h) Comply with the Constitution, By-Laws and enactments of this Church, taking no actions in conflict therewith.
- Item 3. (i) If, after counsel and written admonition by the President of this Church, followed by a Pastoral visitation by a representative commission composed of ministers and laypersons appointed by the Executive Council, a congregation persists in any of the following offenses:
- (a) turning aside from the faith confessed by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Guyana as set forth in Article II of its constitution;
  - (b) refusing or neglecting to exercise proper discipline over its members; or

- (c) willfully violating or disregarding the Constitution or official actions of this Church,

such a congregation shall be suspended or excluded from membership in this Church by action of the convention. A congregation, which is excluded from membership, shall be prohibited from using the properties previously entrusted to its care. Prior to such action by the convention, the President and Executive Council shall present to the convention a record of the actions taken in conformity with the procedure above described, and opportunity shall be given to the accused congregation to be heard either in person through a chosen representative or through a written communication. A two-thirds vote of those present and eligible to vote at a convention of this Church shall be required to find a congregation guilty and to order its suspension or exclusion.

- (ii) Where any individual member persists in offenses (a) and (c) and above the same procedures under Item 3 (I) above shall be followed prior to suspension or exclusion from membership of any congregation of this Church by the Executive Council, should his/her congregation fail or neglect to discipline him/her.

- Item 4. For the purpose of this Constitution and its By-Laws, a member in good standing shall be a person who regularly attends worship and supports the congregation of which he is a communing member.

## **SECTION 1 B – CONSTITUTION OF A CONGREGATION AND PARISH**

### **ARTICLE I – APPLICATION**

This Constitution shall be the constitution of each congregation **and each Parish** of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Guyana.

### **ARTICLE II – CONFESSION OF FAITH**

To be identical with Article II of the Constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Guyana.

### **ARTICLE III – AFFILIATION**

Section 1. This congregation **and Parish** shall always be an integral part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Guyana.

Section 2. This congregation **and Parish** shall co-operate with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Guyana in all its efforts to promote the Kingdom

of Christ in Guyana and abroad; and shall strive to contribute systematically at least its proportionate share of the funds needed for the life and work of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Guyana as indicated in its budget adopted by the annual Convention of the Church.

#### **ARTICLE IV – MEMBERSHIP**

Section 1. **The congregation and Parish** shall consist of its Pastor and other baptized persons within its fellowship.

Section 2. Admission to a congregation may take place in any of the following ways, subject to a majority affirmative vote of the Church Council except in the cases of children admitted by baptism:

- (a) By Baptism: - i.e., Adults who receive baptism after previous instruction, and children who receive baptism before the age of separate responsibility.
- (b) By Confirmation: - i.e., Persons who have been baptized and have received catechetical instruction.
- (c) By Transfer: - i.e., Persons who come from other Lutheran congregations and who obtain a Letter of Transfer.
- (d) By Special Order: - i.e., Persons who come from non-Lutheran congregations and whose lives are in accord with the Word of God; after receiving instructions, they shall declare before the congregation their readiness to accept the doctrines of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Guyana and to accommodate themselves to its forms and usages.
- (e) By Re-Affirmation of Faith: - i.e., Persons who have been confirmed in the Lutheran Church, but who have allowed their membership to lapse, and now want to be restored to active membership; they shall make the Declaration of Faith as in the Order of Confirmation before the congregation.

Section 3: Duties of Members – The members of the congregation shall honour God, and seek His Gift of Grace by regular attendance at Worship Services and by partaking of the Lord’s Supper as provided for the congregation. They shall read and seek to understand the Bible and devout literature in accordance with the Scriptures. They shall live godly lives. They shall bring their children in early infancy to Holy Baptism, and shall bring them to the Services and Sunday School of the congregation and, subsequently, to catechetical instructions. They shall inform the Pastor of illness. They shall live peaceably with one another and, in case differences should arise, they should endeavour to settle them in a Christian manner, with the help of their brethren and without recourse to law. They shall have regard for the needy and



distressed everywhere and particularly for those of their Church. They shall contribute according to their ability and in manner adopted by this congregation to the work of the congregation. They shall contribute to the general work of missions, mercy and education as carried on by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Guyana. They shall seek to further the life and growth of their congregation.

Section 4: Classification of Members.

- (a) Baptized Members: All baptized persons, children and adults, connected with this congregation are its baptized members.
- (b) Confirmed Members: All persons who have received the rite of Confirmation or who have been otherwise declared members and authorized to receive the Lord's Supper and to participate in all the spiritual privileges of the Church, whether active or inactive, resident or non-resident, whose names have not been removed from the roll by death, transfer or dismissal shall be regarded as confirmed.
- (c) Communicant Members: Members who partake of Holy Communion at least twice a year shall be regarded as communicant members.
- (d) Active Members: Members who have communed at least four (4) times a year and made financial contributions of record within the calendar year shall be regarded as active members.

Section 5. Rights of Members

- (a) All confirmed members have the responsibility to attend worship services, to partake of Holy Communion unless under discipline, and to ask for the services of the Pastor and Church in all necessary cases.
- (b) All **active** members shall have the right and responsibility to vote at congregational/**joint congregational** meetings.

Section 6: Discipline

- (a) It shall be the duty of the Church Council to administer the discipline of the Church on all those whose conduct is inconsistent with the Christian profession, or who entertain fundamental errors of faith.
- (b) Any member affiliating himself with any organization whose teachings and practices are inconsistent with the Christian faith shall be excommunicated in accordance with Article VII, Section 3 (b).

- (c) If a member of this congregation is married by a marriage officer of a non-Christian religion, such member shall automatically be disqualified from holding any office in this congregation. After a period of two (2) years from the date of marriage, his/her disqualification shall be removed provided that during the interim he/she shall have conscientiously complied with the duties of members as enumerated in Article IV, Section 3 of this Constitution.

Section 7. Termination of Membership

- (a) Should a member make a request for **transfer** to a congregation not of the Lutheran faith, the Church Council may grant such statement of standing as, in its judgement, is just and proper.
- (b) Membership in this congregation may be terminated in any of the following ways: death, transfer, suspension and excommunication.

**ARTICLE V – CONGREGATIONAL/JOINT CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS**

Section 1. An annual congregational/joint congregational meeting **of the Parish (where more than one congregation constitute the Parish)** shall be held in the month of January or as soon as possible, but not later than the last day of February each year, at which time:

- (a) the Pastor's report of the year's work **which is required to give a comprehensive review of all the ministries of each congregation in the Parish shall be presented by the Pastor. The meeting shall discuss and vote to receive the Pastor's report. Upon the affirmative vote of a majority of the meeting, the Pastor's report shall be referred to the Parish Council for further consideration and follow-up action;**
- (b) the financial report **of the Treasurer** for the year shall be presented **along with the audit report and Parish budget for consideration and approval**
- (c) **the election of the Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson, the Secretary, Treasurer and five members of the Parish Council shall take place**
- (d) and the plans and priorities for the coming year **as prepared jointly by the Pastor and the Parish Council, shall be considered for the approval of the meeting.**

Section 2. The **Parish** Council may call a congregational/joint congregational meeting for any lawful purpose when **it** deems it necessary, or **it** shall be compelled to do so when requested by one-third of the active members **of the Parish.**

- Section 3. All congregational/**joint congregational** meetings shall be publicly announced at worship services at least **three** Sundays previous to such meetings. The time, place and object of the meeting shall be stated in that announcement.
- Section 4. The quorum necessary to transact business shall be **one-third** of the **active** members, or **40 active** members, which ever is less.
- Section 5. The **Chairperson of the Parish Council** shall preside at all meetings of the **Parish**. In the **Chairperson's** absence, the **Vice-Chairperson** of the **Parsih** shall preside.

#### **ARTICLE VI – THE PASTOR**

- Section 1. The Pastor of this congregation/**Parish** shall be selected by the **joint** Parish/congregational **meeting** on the recommendation of the Parish/ Church Council after consultation with the PRESIDENT **and Executive Council** of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Guyana **and subject to a vote of the majority of the active members present and voting at a duly constituted congregational/joint congregational meeting with the required quorum of one-third or 40 of the active members of the parish.**
- Section 2. Where a congregation does not have a Pastor, the Executive Council shall, after consultation **and agreement of** the Parish Council, appoint an acting Pastor.
- Section 3. (a) The duties of the Pastor of **the** congregation/**parish** shall be identical to the duties of Ministers as set out in **Section 5, Article VII -Ministers** of the Constitution **and the requirements of Section III –Ministers – of the By-Laws** of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Guyana.
- (b) **The Pastor shall also be the Chief Executive Officer of the Congregation(s) and Parish.**
- Section 4. The Pastor shall be assisted and respected in his/her rights and duties by the **Parish** Council.

#### **ARTICLE VII – PARISH COUNCIL**

- Section 1. The **Parish** Council shall be charged with the administration of the temporal and spiritual affairs of the congregation(**s**). It shall consist of the Pastor **as the Chief Executive Officer, together with the**

**Chairperson, the Vice-chairperson, the Secretary, the Treasurer and five Councillors.**

Section 2.

Qualifications

In order to be eligible for election to the **Parish** Council, the candidate must be:

- (a) At least 18 years of age;
- (b) A member of the Lutheran Church for at least two (2) years;
- (c) An active member of the congregation;
- (d) A member who complies conscientiously with the duties for members as stated in "Article IV, Section 3 and Article IV, Section 4 (d).

While holiness of life and conversation is expected of all who name the name of Christ, it is especially required of those who have been called to be office bearers in the Church to show themselves in all things by word and example a pattern of good works.

Section 3.

Duties

- (a) The **Parish** Council shall see that the services are held at the proper time and conducted in accordance with the Order of the Church. It shall see that the Word of God is preached as the Church confesses it, and that the sacraments are properly administered. It shall be the **Parish** Council's duty to provide for and show interest in the Christian instruction of the young and all requiring such instructions. The Council shall assist the Pastor in the performance of the duties of his office particularly in the care of the sick and needy, in the cultivation of harmony among members and in the promotion of the general welfare of the congregation. The Council shall select and dismiss all salaried volunteer officials of the congregation, such as the organist, sexton, etc. It shall provide for the regular services of the congregation during the absence of the Pastor. It shall care for the property of the congregation and see that its secular affairs are properly administered.
- (b) It shall also be the duty of the **Parish** Council to administer the discipline of the Church on all whose conduct is inconsistent with the Christian profession, or who entertain fundamental errors of faith. To this end they shall have the power to call any of the members of the congregation to appear before them, and to endeavour to obtain other witnesses when the case may require it. It shall further be the duty of the Council when any member offends, first

privately to admonish him/her or if necessary to call him/her to account and if these measures prove ineffectual, to excommunicate him/her. Such excommunication shall only be effective if approved by a majority consisting of two-thirds (2/3) of all elected members of the Council with the concurrence of the Pastor. Those who have been excommunicated may be reinstated when sincere repentance is manifested and after a period of probation. Announcement of restoration or excommunication may be published to the congregation if deemed necessary by a majority of the Council.

- (c) If any member of the **Parish** Council shall conduct himself/herself in a manner unworthy of his office, he/she may be accused before the Council. Such accusation must be made in writing and signed by at least six (6) members of the congregation. The Council shall then investigate the case and take any appropriate decisions.
- (d) If a vacancy occurs on the **Parish** Council in the interval between the annual congregational meetings the Council shall elect a member of the congregation to fill the vacancy until the next regular annual congregational meeting.
- (e) **Shall elect the delegates and alternate delegates to the ELCG annual Convention, and notify the Secretary of the ELCG of the names of the delegates and alternates 60 days before the Convention in keeping with Section V; Item 9 of the By-laws of this church.**

#### Section 4.

#### Election to the Church Council

- (a) **Officers and** Councillors shall be elected for a term of two (2) years.
- (b) Elections shall be **by ballot**.
- (c) The Pastor, **in consultation with the Parish Council, shall arrange for a member of this church to** preside at the elections and shall appoint three (3) members of the **Parish** to act as tellers where necessary to count and report to the congregation election results. A majority of the votes cast (i.e. half the number voting plus one) shall be necessary for election. If there should be a tie vote, voting shall continue till the tie is broken.
- (d) Nominations for the **Officers and other** Council membership shall be made by the Council. One nominee shall be presented for each vacancy. Additional nominations may be made from the floor at the annual meetings.

- (e) A member who has served two consecutive terms shall not be eligible for re-election.

## Section 5.

### Meetings of the Parish Council

- (a) The **Parish** Council shall meet regularly once a month, **or (Parishes with congregations in Berbice and Demerara Rivers) at least once per quarter** at the day and hour determined by the Council.
- (b) Any member who absents himself/herself for three consecutive regular meetings without excuse shall have his/her seat declared vacant by the **Parish** Council.
- (c) A quorum shall consist of **at least six** members of the Council. In the necessary absence of the **Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson shall preside; in the absence of both, another member present shall be elected to preside at the said meeting.**
- (d) No **extra-ordinary** business connected with the governance and discipline of the congregation shall be transacted without the presence of the Pastor, unless the congregation is temporarily without a Pastor.
- (e) The **Chairperson, after consultation with the Pastor** may convene the Council for a meeting at any time, and shall convene a meeting of the Council when requested to do so by three (3) members of the Council, or by one-third of the active members of the congregation.

## Section 6.

### Officers of the Parish Council and Congregation

- (a) **In the spirit of mutual support, accountability and briefings** at the first meeting of the Council following the annual meeting, the Council **shall review and discuss the duties and responsibilities of the Pastor, the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, the Secretary, Treasurer and members of the Council, as outlined in this Constitution of the Parish.**
- (b) **The Pastor and the Parish Council shall be responsible for all areas of ministry of the parish including:**
- (i) **worship life,**
  - (ii) **mission and evangelism,**
  - (iii) **organizational life,**
  - (iv) **property maintenance,**
  - (v) **finance and stewardship, and**
  - (vi) **training of the laity for various areas of ministries of the parish.**

**The Pastor and the Officers shall determine the agenda for Council and joint Congregational meetings in keeping with the requirements of this constitution.**

- (c) The duties of the **Chairperson** shall be to call and preside at all meetings of the Council in the absence of the Pastor, and to ensure that all administrative work is cared for when the congregation is without a Pastor.
- (d) **The Vice-Chairperson shall preside and perform the duties of the Chairperson in his/her absence.**
- (e) The duties of the Secretary shall be to care for correspondence of the congregation and to keep an accurate record of all minutes of both congregation and Council meetings.
- (f) The Treasurer shall care for the money of the Congregation. He/She shall ensure that the money is kept safely, and that a complete, accurate and permanent record of all receipts and disbursements is kept. He/She shall submit this record together with all receipts for all expenditures for auditing prior to the annual congregational meeting.
- (g) The Council shall appoint annually one or two auditors to audit the Treasurer's books prior to the annual congregational meeting; or, the Council shall ensure that the Treasurer's books are submitted to such auditing, as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Guyana shall require.

**ARTICLE VIII – GENERAL PROVISIONS**

Any matters not covered by this Constitution shall be determined by the Constitution and By-Laws, policies or decisions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Guyana; or where such matters are not covered by the Constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Guyana, by a majority consisting of two-thirds (2/3) of all elected members of the Council. All such matters are subject to review and final decisions by the Executive Council of the ELCG.

**SECTION II – PARISHES**

- Item 1.
  - (a) Each Parish shall have a Parish Council. The Parish Council **as outlined in Section 1B- Constitution of a Congregation or Parish.**
  - (b) (I) The duties of the **Chairperson** of the Parish **Council** shall be to call and preside at all meetings of the Parish Council in **consultation with** the Pastor, and to ensure that all administrative work is cared for when the Parish is without a Pastor **and to consult the President and Executive**

**Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Guyana for Pastoral services.**

- (II) The duties of the Secretary shall be to care for correspondence of the Parish and to keep an accurate record of all minutes of the meetings of the Parish Council.
- (iii) A copy of the confirmed minutes shall be submitted promptly to the President of the ELCG, who shall bring to the attention of the Executive Council such matters arising out of such minutes as are appropriate.
- (iv) The Treasurer shall care for the money of the Parish. He/She shall ensure that the money is kept safely, and that a complete, accurate and permanent record of all receipts and disbursements is kept. He/She shall submit this record together with all receipts for all expenditures for auditing prior to the annual meeting(s) of the congregation(s).
- Item 2. The delegates and the alternates of the Parish to Convention shall be elected at a meeting of the Parish Council and their names shall be forwarded by the Secretary of the Parish Council or the Pastor of the Parish to the Secretary of this Church at least sixty (60) days before Convention.
- Item 3. The elected delegate and the alternate delegate of the Parish shall serve a term of two years commencing with the beginning of the annual convention of the year in which they were elected. They shall not be eligible to serve for more than two successive terms.
- Item 4. A Parish shall be considered self-supporting when it assumes all of the actual expenses necessary for total operation and existence including meeting its full share of the Church wide budget of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Guyana.

**SECTION III - MINISTERS**

- Item 1. A Minister of this Church shall be a person whose soundness in the faith, aptness to teach, and educational qualifications have been examined and approved in the manner prescribed in the Constitution, and who has been properly ordained; who accepts and adheres to the Confession of Faith of this Church; who is diligent and faithful in the exercise of his/her ministry; and whose life and conduct are above reproach. He/She shall comply with the Constitution, By-Laws and enactments of this Church and of the Parish and congregation of which he/she is a member, and shall participate actively in their undertakings for Christ's Kingdom.
- Item 2. In keeping with the historic discipline and practice of the Lutheran Church and to be true to a sacred trust inherent in the nature of the ministerial



office, no Minister of this Church shall divulge any confidential disclosure given to him/her in the course of his/her care of souls or otherwise in his/her professional capacity, except with the express permission of the person who has confided in him/her or in order to prevent a crime.

- Item 3. Each candidate for ordination or other ministerial application for admittance into the service of this Church shall appear in person before the Executive Council for an interview or examination. Ministers who are members of other Lutheran or non-Lutheran Churches shall present with their application a certificate of release from their Church.
- Item 4. **Six (6)** favourable votes in the Executive Council shall be necessary for the approval of a candidate for ordination or reception.
- Item 5. A Minister of this Church who enters the ministry, or joins a congregation, of a Church of a different confession shall cease to be a member of this Church. His/her name shall be removed from the ministerial roll by the President or the Executive Council of this Church, and a report of this action shall be made to the next convention of this Church.
- Item 6. A Minister of this Church who desires to enter a field of labour in another Lutheran Church body shall make application to the Executive Council of this Church for a certificate of transfer. The applicant shall continue to be amenable to this Church until the certificate has been granted and he/she has been formally received into the membership of the other Church body.
- Item 7. A Minister may leave the ministry voluntarily by giving three (3) months written notice to the President and Executive Council of this Church and to his/her Parish Council. A Minister leaving the ministry shall be under obligation to meet all his/her financial responsibilities to this Church.
- Item 8. A Minister who leave the work of the ministry and engages in secular pursuits except as provided for in Section IV of these By-Laws, or who enters such pursuits without the consent of the Executive Council of this Church and his/her Parish while serving under a call, shall cease to be a Minister of this Church during the period of such business or employment. The Executive Council of this Church, by proper action, shall remove his name from the ministerial roll until such time as he/she resumes full-time work in the ministry with the consent of the Executive Council of this Church, who shall then restore him/her to said roll and report its action to the next convention of this Church.
- Item 9. A Minister under discipline by this Church or otherwise removed by it from the ministerial roll must be restored by this Church to good standing before becoming eligible for transfer to another Church body.

## **SECTION IV – DISCIPLINE**

Item 1. To assure full equity and protection of the rights both of the individual concerned and of this Church, the procedure in cases of discipline of ministers shall be as follows:

- (a) Ministers shall be subject to discipline for any of the following offenses:
  - (1) Preaching or teaching doctrines in conflict with the Confession of Faith as set forth in the foregoing Constitution.
  - (2) Conduct incompatible with moral purity or with the character of his/her calling.
  - (3) Willful disregard and violation of the Constitution and constitutional resolutions of this Church and of the Parish and congregation of which he/she is a member.

The above recital of offenses subjecting a Minister to discipline shall not prevent this Church from terminating his/her relationship with a particular Parish or with this Church for other and non-disciplinary causes.

- (b) The penalties which may be imposed upon Ministers are:
  - (1) Private censure and admonition by the President of this Church.
  - (2) Public censure and admonition before the convention.
  - (3) Suspension from duties for a designated period or until there is satisfactory evidence of repentance and amendment.
  - (4) Deposition and dismissal.
- (c) Charges against a Minister must be specific, in writing, subscribed by the accusers and may be made in the first instance:
  - (1) to the Parish Council of the Minister's congregation or Parish by at least five (5) members in good standing;
  - (2) by the Parish Council itself upon reports of the misconduct;
  - (3) by at least two (2) ministerial members of this Church;
  - (4) by the President after consultation with the Executive Council of this Church;
  - (5) or by the Executive Council.
- (d) When charges have been made to or by a Parish Council, it shall, either in session or through representatives appointed from among its membership, confer with the minister and shall, if the nature of the charges permit, seek to reconcile all parties and to obviate all causes of complaint. If in the judgement of a majority of the Council, based upon the evidence of at least two credible

witnesses, a presumptive case for discipline appears, it shall so report to the President of this Church **who shall refer the matter immediately to the next Executive Council meeting.**

- (e) Accusing members of a congregation, after having laid charges before the Parish Council, shall take no further steps, unless the Parish Council shall unduly delay action upon the complaint or decide against reference to the **Executive Council** of this Church, in which case the accusing members may themselves lay their accusations before the President of this Church.
- (f) When an accusation has been lodged with or initiated by the President of this Church after consultation with the Executive Council, he/she shall at once attempt to communicate with the accused concerning the charges and shall notify him/her of their nature. If the Executive Council of this Church deems further proceedings necessary, it shall appoint an investigating committee consisting of two Ministers and one lay person of this Church who are not members of the Executive Council and who are not any of the accusers.
- (g) The Chairman of the investigating committee shall fix the time and place for a preliminary hearing of the charges and shall give the accused ten days notice in writing of said time and place with the further information that the accused may be present with counsel, who shall be either a Minister or a lay person belonging to a congregation of this Church. Should the accused fail to appear either personally, or by counsel, the Executive Council of this Church shall appoint a minister to protect the interests of the accused and the hearing may proceed in the absence of the accused. The accused or counsel may question any witness against him/her and the accused shall be allowed to testify on his/her own behalf. The committee is privileged but not required to hear other witnesses in mitigation of the charges or in contradiction of the accusing witnesses.
- (h) The investigating committee shall submit a full report and its findings to the Executive Council of this Church, either absolving the accused or declaring that there is sufficient evidence of guilt.
- (i) Upon receipt of a report that sufficient evidence of guilt exists, the Executive Council of this Church shall take appropriate disciplinary action.
- (j) The action of the Executive Council shall conclude the rights of the accuser and accused. The accused may, however, by application to the Executive Council of this Church seek vindication on the basis of after-discovered evidence disclosed to the Executive

Council or seek mitigation of the penalty on the basis of repentance and amendment. Any such application shall be referred by the Executive Council of this Church at its discretion, to an investigating committee, which may be the same as the previously appointed investigating committee, for report to the Executive Council.

- (k) If, during investigation, obvious heresy or gross immorality of the accused is apparent, or if he/she shall have admitted his/her guilt or absconded, or if the circumstances are such that, in the opinion of the Executive Council of this Church, the Church should suffer material injury by the accused continuing to perform his/her duties during the progress of investigation, the Executive Council may immediately suspend the accused from duties until the charges against him/her have been fully and finally decided by this Church.
- (l) If at any stage of the investigation it appears that the accused cannot be reached by notice, or that the communication of such notice would be futile, notice to a fellow minister of this Church, appointed by the Executive Council of this Church to protect the interests of the accused, shall fulfill the requirements of notice set forth in previous paragraphs of this item.
- (m) The first annual Convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Guyana after disciplinary action has been taken by the Executive Council against a minister may entertain an appeal made by that minister in writing addressed to the President and Convention. Convention may allow the minister to support his appeal in person or through any member of Convention.

#### **SECTION V – CONVENTIONS**

- Item 1. The fiscal year of this Church shall close the thirty-first day of December.
- Item 2. The annual Convention of this Church shall be held during the first two weeks in May at such time and place as the Executive Council may determine at least one year in advance. The Vice-President shall notify the current Convention, during a business session, for its endorsement of the venue and date of the next Convention.
- Item 3. Invitations from Parishes wishing to entertain a convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Guyana shall be submitted to the Executive Council at least four months prior to the Convention, if possible.
- Item 4. The Secretary shall give notice, by mail at least three (3) months in advance, of the time and place of each regular convention. He/She shall give notice of Special Conventions by mail immediately upon the issuance of the call thereof.

- Item 5. The arrangements for conventions of this Church shall be made by the Secretary in conjunction with a committee appointed by the host Parish for that purpose.
- Item 6. The Secretary shall send out a bulletin of reports including the minutes of the last convention to all delegates-elect at least fifteen days before each regular convention.
- Item 7. This Church shall defray the following costs of conventions from the Church treasury: printing of bulletins of reports, ballots, minutes, etc., and general convention expenses. The host Parish shall be responsible for expenses incidental to local convention arrangements.
- Item 8. The Executive Council shall appoint a chaplain who shall be responsible for the devotional periods of the Convention.
- Item 9. The Secretary or the Pastor of each Parish shall forward to the Secretary of this Church at least sixty (60) days before Convention a certified list of the regular and alternate delegates elected by his/her Parish. The roll of the delegates to each Convention shall be prepared by the Secretary in advance of the Convention. Changes in the roll of delegates must be authorized by the Parish concerned prior to the beginning of convention. Only **active** members in good standing in a congregation of this Church shall be eligible to be lay delegates.
- Item 10. Delegates and Ministers shall not absent themselves from any sessions of the Convention without valid excuse. Notification of such absences shall be made to the Secretary and Parishes concerned.
- Item 11. During the first business session of each regular convention, the President shall announce the appointment by the Executive Council of the following committees:
- (a) Committee on Reference and Counsel
  - (b) Committee on Minutes
  - (c) Committee on Registration, Credentials and Conduct of Elections
- Item 12. Convention shall receive and consider the following reports:
- (a) Report of the:
    - (i) President**
    - (ii) Vice-President**
  - (b) Report of the Secretary
  - (c) Reports **on Financial matters:**
    - i. **Report of the Treasurer (for reception)**
    - ii. **The Auditor's report (for adoption)**
    - iii. **The Church-wide Budget for the next biennium (for approval).**
- Item 13. A resolution of a general character which is not germane to the pending question or report shall be given to the Committee on Reference and

Counsel by the delegate proposing such resolution. The Committee on reference and Counsel shall report all such resolutions to the convention with its recommendations. Memorials from Parishes shall be submitted to the Committee on Reference and Counsel at the commencement of convention for the committee's study and recommendations to the convention. Other duties of the committee shall be to recommend special orders for the hearing of representatives, to grant or deny permission to distribute printed matter not issuing from the office of the Secretary, and to give such assistance to the President as he may desire in the course of the convention.

- Item 14. The Committee on Minutes shall approve the draft minutes of the meetings of the convention and report thereon to the Executive Council. Approval of the minutes of the convention shall be the responsibility of the Executive Council of this Church at its first regular meeting after convention and the Executive Council shall implement all actions of convention without delay.
- Item 15. The privilege of the floor shall be granted to all members of the Executive Council at all times. This privilege shall also be granted to all chairpersons of standing committees, in connection with matters relative to their committees.
- Item 16. Fraternal representatives from other **Lutheran** Church bodies may be given seat and voice, but no vote, in the convention.
- Item 17. Unless otherwise determined by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the convention, all speeches in general discussion shall be limited to five minutes.
- Item 18. When a motion calling for an appropriation comes before the convention from any source other than the Executive Council, it shall be referred at once to the Executive Council for consideration and report. A two-thirds (2/3) vote of the voting body present and voting shall be required for adoption.
- Item 19. The Convention shall consider such other matters as may be outlined in its Constitution and By-Laws.

#### **SECTION VI – ELECTIONS**

- Item 1 (a) The Executive Council shall invite all Parish Councils, three months prior to the annual Convention, by February 1 in an election year, to submit nomination(s) for any position on the Executive Council in keeping with this Constitution and By-laws, except upon the adoption of these By-laws, Convention shall elect two additional lay persons for the remainder of the biennium, to complete the composition of the Executive Council.

- (b) Nominations from Parishes, approved at a duly constituted Parish Council meeting, shall be submitted to the Executive Council by March 15 together with a statement from the Parish Council certifying the nomination and the date of the Parish Council meeting when the nomination was made and approved by the said Parish Council.
- (c) All nominations received by the Executive Council shall be kept in confidence, and handed to the Committee on the Conduct of Elections. The Committee shall review the nominations to ensure that they were made in keeping Constitution and By-laws of this Church.
- (d) All elections shall proceed on the basis of nominations received and presented by the Committee on the Conduct of Elections, and from additional nominations, duly move and seconded by members of the voting body of Convention.

Item 2. In elections by the convention, the following rules shall obtain:

- (a) All elections shall be by ballot. In all elections except that of the President, a majority of the votes cast on any ballot shall elect.
- (b) On the first ballot for President, three-fourths (3/4) of the votes cast shall be required for election. On the second ballot, two-thirds (2/3) of the votes cast shall be required for election. On the third ballot, the voting shall be limited to the two persons receiving the highest vote on the second ballot and a majority of the votes cast shall elect. In the event more than two persons receive the highest vote on the second ballot, balloting shall continue on the persons receiving the highest vote until the tie for the top two places is broken or until one person receives a majority of the votes, whichever is sooner.
- (c) In elections of members of the Executive Council, the names of the persons receiving the highest number of votes but not elected on a preceding ballot shall be entered on the next ballot to the number of two for each vacancy unfilled.
- (d) The result of each ballot in every election shall be announced in detail to the Convention by the Committee on Conduct of Elections.

## **SECTION VII – OFFICERS**

Item 1. The **Vice**-President and Secretary shall, after the Executive Council making any necessary corrections therein, certify two copies of the printed minutes of each convention as the official protocol of said convention, and shall submit the same to the next convention for consideration in terms of matters arising and deposit in the archives.

- Item 2. The Treasurer shall have training, or experience, or aptitude in financial administration.
- Item 3. All instruments of conveyance belonging to this Church, that is, transports, mortgages, leases, etc., all bonds, and other evidence of ownership of property or of rights in or to property, including tangible property, shall be held and properly secured in the Church's office in the custody of the **Vice**-President or the treasurer, who shall have charge thereof to do with the same as may from time to time be directed by the Executive Council.
- Item 4. (a) The recall or dismissal of an officer of this Church and the vacation of his/her office may be effected:
- (1) for willful disregard or violation of the Constitution, authority or resolutions of this Church;
  - (2) for such physical or mental disability as presumably renders the officer incapable of performing the duties of his office for the balance of his term in office; or
  - (3) for such conduct as would render him subject to disciplinary action in the congregation of which he is a member.
- (b) Proceedings for recall or dismissal shall be instituted by filing with the Executive Council a petition stating specifically the charge or charges. Such a petition shall be:
- (1) upon action of the Executive Council adopted with the affirmative vote of six (6) members; or
  - (2) signed by at least two-fifths ( $2/5$ ) of those who were delegates to the latest convention of this Church, at least five (5) of whom shall be Ministers and at least five (5) laypersons.
- (c) The Executive Council shall appoint a committee of five (5) made up of three (3) ministers and two (2) laypersons, who were delegates to the latest convention of this Church, who shall hear the case and make final disposition thereof.
- (a) The chairperson of this committee shall cause a copy of the petition to be delivered to the accused officer, together with a notice of the time and place when the committee will meet to hear the charges and the accused officer's defense thereto. After hearing such testimony as it may deem necessary and helpful, the committees shall decide promptly whether the charges have been sustained and whether the accused officer shall be recalled or dismissed and his/her office vacated. If the charges are not sustained by the concurring vote of three (3) members of the committee, the petition shall be deemed denied and a judgement of denial of the petition shall be entered upon the records of the committee, which



judgement shall be final and not subject to appeal. In any case, the committee shall report the filing of the petition and its disposition to the next convention.

- (b) Notice of a decision by the committee that the charges have been sustained shall be given the accused officer, and unless he/she shall, within thirty (30) days after receipt of such notice, file with the committee an appeal of such decision to the next convention, the committee shall enter judgement that the officer has been recalled or dismissed and his/her office vacated, and the Executive Council shall be notified of the entry of such judgement.
  - (c) Upon appeal by the accused officer, the next convention may decide by a two-thirds (2/3) vote, after debate but without receiving testimony, that the officer shall be recalled or dismissed and the office vacated.
  - (d) After a decision that the charges have been sustained, if it be deemed essential to good order that the accused officer should be meanwhile suspended, the committee, three members concurring, shall direct its chairperson so to notify the Executive Council, which in such case shall suspend the accused officer from performance of the duties of his office pending action on an appeal, and may make provision for performance of such duties ad interim.
  - (e) The committee shall promulgate such additional rules of procedure as it may deem necessary for the performance of its duties under the item.
- iv. The procedures prescribed in this item shall relate solely to recall or dismissal from office, and shall not in any way affect or be affected by any disciplinary action of a congregation or Parish or of this Church based upon the same charge or charges.

Item 5. Assistants to officers may be appointed, and their duties defined, by the Executive Council at its discretion in consultation with the officer concerned.

### **SECTION VIII – EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Item 1. The power of the Executive Council to review the actions of auxiliaries and Parish Councils shall be exercised following receipt of the minutes in which such actions are recorded. If a specific action is, in the judgement of the Executive Council, not within the powers of the auxiliary or Parish Council concerned or not in conformity with a policy laid down by the convention or the Executive Council, formal declaration of that fact shall postpone or suspend the effectiveness of said action. Unless the action in question is meanwhile rescinded, the issue shall be reported to the next convention for adjudication. This shall apply to actions both of

conventions and of the Executive bodies of auxiliaries or of congregational meetings or of Parish Council meetings.

Item 2. The Executive Council shall have power to issue pronouncements on social or moral issues in the name of this Church between its conventions when in the judgement of the Executive Council, an emergency exists or when to delay such action until the next Convention would destroy the effectiveness or seriously impair the timeliness of an utterance that this Church ought in conscience to make. Concurrence of six of the total membership of the Executive Council shall be required in each such instance.

Item 3. Within the limitations of the budget the Executive Council may elect official representatives to assemblies of the Lutheran World Federation, and the Caribbean Conference of Churches.

Item 4 (a) The Executive Council shall convene a half-yearly meeting of all Standing Committees and Other committees in conjunction with a regular meeting of the Executive Council at such time and place as determined by the Executive Council.

The Executive Council shall give at least three weeks notice of such meetings.

(b) The Executive Council shall prepare the agenda of each Standing Committee and each Other Committee, in keeping with the Committees' responsibilities, as outline in the By-laws.

(c) The Standing and Other Committees shall report to the said Executive Council meeting, which shall receive the report and act on all necessary recommendations at the said or following Executive Council meeting.

Item (5) The Executive Council shall attend to all affairs of this Church not otherwise provided for including inter-Church relations, international and ecumenical Church affairs relating to the Guyana Council of Churches, the Caribbean Conference of Churches, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and the Lutheran World Federation, and matters relating to radio broadcast and other media communication.

### **SECTION IX – STANDING COMMITTEE**

Item 1. The Committee on Mission and Evangelism

(a) This committee shall consist of a Chair and at least four (4) other members

(b) It shall be the duty of this committee, subject to the approval of Convention or the Executive Council:

- (1) To stimulate mission and evangelism in the congregations of this Church by such measures as the following:
  - (a) Encouraging a year around emphasis upon mission and evangelism in each congregation.
  - (b) Giving leadership to special mission and evangelism efforts within areas or single Parishes.
  - (c) Recruiting and training resource leaders.
- (2) To recommend the establishing of Sunday Schools and Preaching Points, within Parishes and beyond.
- (3) To perform such other duties as may be assigned to it by the Convention or the Executive Council.
- (4) To submit an annual report to the President and Executive Council two months before the regular convention.

Item 2. The Committee on Christian Education and Literature

- (a) The committee shall consist of the Director of the Christian Education staff and other members of the staff (not office workers), the chairman who shall be either a Pastor or layperson – but not the Director of the staff, and five (5) other members. The total membership shall include at least one Pastor and one member of the Executive Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Guyana.
- (b) It shall be the duty of this committee, subject to the approval of the Convention or the Executive Council:
  - (1) To set the syllabus and secure or prepare the necessary literature for the courses of religious instruction for the Church; such as, Sunday School, Vacation Church School, Confirmation Classes, Adult Courses.
  - (2) To be responsible for planning leadership training for Church wide area meetings for teachers of the various courses.
  - (3) To encourage qualified persons of the Church to prepare for full-time service in the field of Christian Education.
  - (4) To be the liaison with the Caribbean Conference of Churches and the Guyana Council of Churches in matters relating to Christian education.
  - (5) To have charge of the visual aid library.
  - (6) To perform such other duties as may be assigned to it by the Convention or the Executive Council.
  - (7) To submit an annual report to the President and Executive Council two months before the regular convention.

Item 3. The Committee on Finance and stewardship

- (a) This committee shall consist of five (5) members with the Treasurer of the Church as chairperson.

- (b) It shall be the duty of this committee, subject to the approval of the convention or the Executive Council:
- (1) To prepare the proposed budget of the Church for the succeeding year, including each congregation's full indicated share in support of the ministry being carried on by this Church, and to submit such proposed budget to the Executive Council for its study and later presentation to the annual convention of this Church for adoption.
  - (2) To exercise oversight of all the financial affairs of this Church and to make sure that they are being conducted efficiently.
  - (3) To be responsible for this Church's investments, subject to the approval of the Executive Council.
  - (4) To suggest improvements to the financial system.
  - (5) To make recommendations on all insurance.
  - (6) To make an annual examination of all investments and securities held by this Church, and report to the Executive Council.
  - (7) To provide for a half-yearly report and annual audit of all the accounts of this Church for report and presentation to the Executive Council and Convention.
  - (8) To have general oversight of the finances of all Parishes to ensure that Parish accounts are properly audited and submitted to the Treasurer of the ELCG for report to the Executive Council and the annual Convention of this Church.
  - (9) To be in charge of the general stewardship programme of this Church and to stress education and growth in Christian Stewardship in every aspect of the Christian life.
  - (10) To endeavour to lead the congregations of this Church to higher levels of Christian service and giving, and to discourage the use of all unscriptural methods of money raising.
  - (11) To perform such other duties as may be assigned to it by the Convention or the Executive Council.

Item 4. The Committee on Interpretation

- (a) This committee shall comprise of three (3) Ministers and two lay persons of this Church with the President of this Church as Chair.
- (b) It shall be the duty of this committee, subject to the approval of the convention or the Executive Council:
  - (1) To give interpretation of matters of principle or practice which may arise under the Constitution and By-Laws or otherwise within this Church. Referral of such matters to the committee shall be by resolution of the convention or the Executive Council.
  - (2) To give interpretation of matters of doctrine or conscience which have been referred to it for its counsel at the discretion

of the convention or the Executive Council, which shall be free to use any alternate method to ascertain the right application of the truth of the Gospel to the question at issue. Such interpretations of the committee shall be submitted to the Executive Council for consideration and presentation to the next regular Convention of this Church.

- (3) To exercise the right of passing on the conformity to the confessions of this Church of all literature published by this Church or officially used by it.
- (4) To report its work to the Executive Council two months before the annual convention for inclusion in the president's report to convention. If the Convention desires the report modified in any respect, the matter shall be referred back to the committee for further consideration.
- (5) To perform such other duties as may be assigned to it by the Convention or the Executive Council.

Item 5. Other Committees

The Executive Council may appoint other committees including:

(a) Committee on Worship

Terms of Reference of the Committee on Worship:

- (1) To assist in developing the devotional life of families and individual Church members.
- (2) To assist in developing the worship life of the congregations.
- (3) To help to deepen the sense of reverence, adoration, and holiness in worship.
- (4) To provide information and materials to keep up to date and enrich worship practices.
- (5) Any other relevant duties assigned by the Executive Council.
- (6) To submit an Annual Report to the President and Executive Council two (2) months prior to the Annual Convention of this Church.

(b) Church Vocations Committee

Terms of Reference of the Church Vocations Committee:

Under the general direction and control of the Executive Council:

- (1) To assist in identifying suitable potential candidates for the full-time Ministry of the Church.
- (2) To interview suitable applicants for Ministerial training, and make recommendations to the Executive Council
- (3) To make recommendations on training, and suitable training institutions for ministerial students.

- (4) To make recommendations or nominations of clergy and or laity for training, seminars, consultations, and conferences where appropriate.
  - (5) To deal with other relevant matters referred to it by the President or the Executive Council.
  - (6) To submit an annual report to the President and Executive Council two months prior to the annual convention of this Church.
- (c) Committee on Youth Ministry

The Youth Ministry shall be the official national youth auxiliary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Guyana.

Objectives:

- (1) To assist in developing and strengthening the Christian Faith of youth, and the disciplining of their Christian lives so they can serve more effectively as instruments of God to win more and more souls for the Kingdom.
- (2) To identify the interests and needs of youth and provide programmes, which are relevant, by which youth may grow into Christian maturity.
- (3) To visit congregational youth organizations and offer every possible assistance to the strengthening of these organizations.
- (4) To sponsor Church-wide youth activities – Camping, Rallies, Seminars, Retreats, etc.

Composition:

- (1) The committee, which shall be appointed biennially, shall include three (3) Pastors, two (2) lay people (these five (5) to be appointed by the Executive Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Guyana, and one youth from each of the Parishes of this Church.
- (2) The Executive Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Guyana shall appoint the Chair of the Committee and a Treasurer, in consultation with the Youth Commission. The committee shall appoint annually a Secretary.

Finance:

- (1) The committee shall operate under a budget proposed by the committee and approved by the Executive Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Guyana.
- (2) The committee shall approve all expenditure of funds. The chair along with two other members, selected by the committee, shall be a signatory to all cheques.

- (3) The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Guyana shall give an annual grant to the committee.
- (4) Each congregational youth organization shall be apportioned a per capita amount based on its membership as of December 31<sup>st</sup> of the preceding year.
- (5) The practice of Christian Stewardship shall govern all the financial activities of the committee.
- (6) To submit an annual report to the President and Executive Council of the Church two (2) months before the regular convention.

### **SECTION X – EXAMINATION AND CALLS**

Item 1. The following procedure shall be followed by the Executive Council (acting as an examining committee) in regard to the examining, ordination and reception of ministers.

- (a) All applications for ordination shall be made to the President and referred by him to the Executive Council.
- (b) The examination of candidates for ordination shall test the general fitness of each applicant for the office of the ministry, his/her reasons for seeking the office, his/her theological attainments, his/her acceptance of the doctrinal basis of this Church and his loyal appreciation of the organization and work of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Guyana.
- (c) Every candidate to be ordained shall present to the Executive Council his/her call to a particular Parish, and his/her own written statement that he/she has accepted such a call as a prior condition for his/her ordination by this Church.
- (d) Applications for reception into this Church from those who have been ordained in some other Church shall be dealt with in the same manner as outlined for candidates for ordination.
- (e) Every applicant for admission to this Church by ordination or reception shall affirm in writing to the President and Executive Council of this Church prior to his/her admission that he/she shall abide by the Constitution, By-Laws and all the enactments of this Church.

Item 2. Evangelical Lutheran Church in Guyana Official Call

TO \_\_\_\_\_

Grace be unto you, and peace  
from God our Father and from the  
Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

At a meeting of the Executive Council of the EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN GUYANA, on ..... we, the ..... undersigned officers of the Church were authorized and directed to extend to you a Call to become a Pastor of .....the Evangelical Church in Guyana with the understanding that you will serve in a Parish, which will also extend a call to you. As a Pastor of the Church, you will be required to preach and teach the pure word of God and administer the Holy Sacraments in harmony with the confessional standards in the EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN GUYANA.

You will also be required to teach and receive in confirmation children of the Church in harmony with their baptismal covenant, admit others to membership in the Church when properly prepared, set a true example of Christian conduct before all men, maintain Scriptural discipline in the Parish, visit the sick and afflicted, administer the consolations of the Gospel to the dying, and perform all other duties of your sacred office required by the Holy Scripture. In the name of the said EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN GUYANA, we pledge to you our love, our prayers, our loyal co-operation and our cheerful support; and we pray to the great Head of the Church that he may incline you to follow our Call, and labour among us in the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of peace.

This Call shall be for the duration of your active full time ministry with the EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN GUYANA, and carries with it the right of supervision over all ministry by the authority of the Church. Provision for your material support shall be in accordance with the policies of the Church. In particular your remuneration, consistent with the ELCG salary scales and policies, will be the responsibility of the Parish that calls you.

**As a Pastor of this church, you are required at all times to abide by, and uphold the Constitution and By-laws of this church, a copy of which is enclosed. As a sign of your acceptance, kindly sign and return the attached copy of this letter of Call.**



In testimony whereof we have set the seal of the said Church, and subscribe our names, this .....day of .....In the year of our Lord, 20...

THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN GUYANA

.....  
President

.....  
Secretary

**I,....., the undersigned accept the above Call with its terms and conditions, the Constitution and By-laws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Guyana.**

**Signature.....**

**Date.....**

Item 3. Evangelical Lutheran Church in Guyana Parish Call

TO \_\_\_\_\_

Grace be unto you, and peace  
from God our Father and from the  
Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

At a **duly constituted** meeting of the ..... Parish Council of the EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN GUYANA, held on ..... **voted to extend a call to you to serve as its Pastor for a term of four years from .....20....** We, the undersigned officers/members of the ..... Parish Council were therefore authorized and directed to extend to you a Parish Call to serve as a Pastor of the..... Parish of the EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN GUYANA.

As a Pastor of the Church, you will be required to preach and teach the pure Word of God and administer the HOLY Sacraments in harmony with the Confessional Standards of the EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN GUYANA.

You will also be required to teach and receive in confirmation children of the Church in harmony with their Baptismal Covenant, admit others to membership in the Church when properly prepared, set a true example of Christian conduct before all men, maintain Scriptural discipline in the Parish, visit the sick and afflicted, administer the consolations of the

Gospel to the dying, and perform all other duties of your sacred office required by the Holy Scripture.

In the name of the said..... Parish **of** the EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN GUYANA, we pledge to you our love, our prayers, our loyal co-operation, and our cheerful support; and we pray to the Great Head of the Church that He may incline you to follow our Call, and labour among us in the fullness of the blessing of the Gospel of Peace.

This Parish Call shall be for the duration of your active full time ministry with the EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN GUYANA or until you accept another Parish Call, after consultation with the Parish and the ELCG Executive Council, or until this Parish extends another Parish Call after consultation with you and the ELCG Executive Council, and carries with it the right of supervision over all ministry by the authority of the Church. Provision for your material support shall be in accordance with the policies of the Church. In particular your **remuneration**, consistent with the ELCG salary scales **and policies**, will be the responsibility of the Parish.

**As a Pastor of this church, you are required at all times to abide by, and uphold the Constitution and By-laws of this church, a copy of which is enclosed. As a sign of your acceptance, kindly sign and return the attached copy of this letter of Parish Call.**

In testimony whereof we have set the stamp of the said Parish, and subscribe our names, this ..... day of .....in the year of our Lord: 20...

The .....Parish of the EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN GUYANA .

.....  
**Chairperson**

.....  
Secretary

.....  
Treasurer

**I,....., the undersigned accept the above Call with its terms and conditions, the Constitution and By-laws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Guyana.**

**Signature.....**

**Date.....**

Item 4. Supplement to the Calls

PROVISION FOR MATERIAL SUPPORT OF PASTORS

The principle upon which provision is made for the material welfare of Pastors of the Church is quite different from that involved in business or in government. In these other fields, a person is free to seek that position in which the material gains are the greatest. His/Her salary and other benefits are intended as remuneration for a certain number of hours of labour or a certain amount of service performed. In the Church, "the love of Christ constraineth us." The material provisions given a Pastor are intended to enable him/her to live in simplicity and to devote his/her full time and energies to the service of God and the people.

The following items constitute the remuneration package for Pastors: salary, parsonage, insurance and pensions, travelling allowance, annual vacation, annual vacation allowance, electricity allowance, and telephone allowance for local and official overseas calls.

The Parish Council, with the approval of the Executive Council, shall provide the Pastor being called, with the relevant details of the remuneration package.

**SECTION XI – MINISTERIUM**

Item 1. (a) A regular meeting of the Ministerium **shall** be held at **least every six months**. Other meetings, if necessary, may be called by the chairman. At each regular meeting a paper on some pertinent doctrine, policy or practice of the Church shall be read and discussed.

(b) **The Ministerium as a body of Ministers of this church shall endeavour faithfully to discharge the duties and obligations as outlined in Article XIII, Section 2 of the Constitution of this Church.**

Item 2. **All Ministers of this Church shall shall attend and participate in meetings of the Ministerium. In cases of unavoidable absence, the absentee shall submit a reasonable excuse to the President as Chair of the Ministerium. Any Minister, who after two warnings by the Executive Council, is absent without excuse from meetings of the Ministerium shall be liable to discipline.**

**SECTION XII – INDIVIDUAL APPOINTMENTS**

Item 1. Statistical Secretary

(a) The Secretary of this Church shall serve as the statistical secretary. It shall be his/her duty to receive from the Pastors

of this Church their annual parochial report. He/She shall collate and analyze the same for his annual report to convention.

Item 2. Archivist and Historian:

- (a) The Executive Council shall appoint a suitable person(s) as archivist and historian.
- (b) The duties of the Archivist and Historian shall be:
  - (1) To be the custodian of the Archives of this Church and to arrange, catalogue and see to the preservation of the items contained therein.
  - (2) To collect and preserve in the Archives all historical material available dealing with the history of this Church.
  - (3) To bind and preserve the issues of "The Southern Cross", "LCG News" and "ELCG Presidential and Pastoral letters" and to collect and preserve copies of all literature issued by this Church.
  - (4) To preserve two (2) complete sets of the official minutes of this Church. Also to preserve all important official letters, papers, documents and historical records of this Church.
  - (5) To grant access to the Archives of this Church only to the officers and ministers of this Church and such other persons as the Executive Council may direct.
  - (6) To permit nothing belonging to the Archives to be loaned, given away or destroyed without special permission of the Executive Council.

Item 3. Necrologist

- (a) The President of this Church shall serve as the Necrologist and shall refer to the life and work of any deceased individuals who served in the employment of this Church in his annual report to Convention.

### **SECTION XIII – EXECUTION OF LEGAL DOCUMENTS**

Item 1. The **Vice**-President and the Secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Guyana, whenever directed by the Executive Council, shall sign and execute all deeds and other documents relating to the property of this Church.

Item 2. Whenever any property is purchased it shall be registered in the name of the Executive Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Guyana, the deed to be delivered to the President or the

Treasurer of this body. (See Articles of Incorporation, Ordinance No. 1 of 1948 of the Laws of British Guiana, Chapter 225).

Item 3. Whenever the President and the Secretary are authorized by the Executive Council of this Church to sell, mortgage or otherwise transfer any property of this Church, they are hereby empowered to make such transactions in the name of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Guyana, and to execute all the necessary documents.

Item 4. The investment of funds belonging to this Church shall be in the name of the Executive Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Guyana under the control of the President and the Secretary of this Church, such investments to be made, changed or transferred only upon order of the Executive Council. (See Articles of Incorporation, Ordinance No. 1 of 1948 of the Laws of British Guiana, Chapter 225).

#### **SECTION XIV – AUXILIARIES**

Item 1. The auxiliaries shall exist for the general purpose of:

- (a) Mutual expression of Christian Living.
- (b) Cultivation of the spiritual life and of evangelical attitudes and motives.
- (c) Development of a sense of Christian vocation.
- (d) Providing a vehicle for the expression of individual Christian responsibility.
- (e) Education in the life and work of the Church, and in particular of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Guyana.
- (f) Opening up avenues of service and fellowship.
- (g) Stimulation of Christian living in home and community.
- (h) Sponsorship of such causes as is assigned to them by this Church.

Item 2. Officers of the auxiliaries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Guyana shall be members in good standing of congregation of this Church.

Item 3. The following organizations are hereby recognized as official auxiliaries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Guyana.

1. The Youth Ministry
2. The Lutheran Church Women
3. The Evangelical Lutheran Church Men of Guyana

Item 4. These auxiliaries shall submit an annual report to the President and Executive Council of this Church two (2) months prior to its annual convention.

## **SECTION XV – RULES OF ORDER**

- Item 1. Debate and Decorum:
- (a) Every delegate and Minister shall have the right to speak once on all questions. After all those desiring to do so have spoken he/she shall have the right to speak again.
  - (b) Every delegate and Minister shall obtain the recognition of the chair before speaking.
  - (c) The mover of any proposition shall have the right to close the debate.
  - (d) Every delegate and Minister shall confine himself/herself strictly to the question before the Convention.
- Item 2. Voting:
- (a) Every delegate and Minister shall have the right to vote on all questions.
  - (b) Any delegate or Minister shall have the right to have his/her dissent, with reasons, recorded on any question or part thereof.
- Item 3. Motions and Resolutions:
- (a) Every delegate and Minister shall have the right to make a motion or offer a resolution.
  - (b) Every motion or resolution shall be presented to the Secretary in writing.
  - (c) Every motion or resolution, unless otherwise indicated, shall require for confirmation a majority vote of the voting body present.
- Item 4. Rules of Order:  
All parliamentary rules and practices not covered by the Constitution and By-Laws shall be determined by Robert's Rules of Order latest edition.

## **SECTION XVI – AMENDMENTS**

- Item 1. Amendments to these By-Laws must be presented in writing to the convention signed by no fewer than five (5) voting members of convention **or at least by five members of the Executive Council of this church.** After such presentation, they shall be referred immediately for consideration to the Executive Council, which shall submit its recommendations thereon to the same convention if possible. A two-thirds vote of the voting body present and voting shall be required for the adoption of each amendment, a quorum being present.