

Constitution
Of
ST JOHN'S GERNANTS CHURCH
13 Gernants Church Road, Leesport, Pa. 19533

Preamble

We, baptized members of the Church of Jesus Christ, responding in faith to the call of the Holy Spirit through the Gospel, desiring to unite together to preach the Word, administer the sacraments, and carry out God's mission, do hereby adopt this constitution and solemnly pledge ourselves to be governed by the spirit of its provisions.

We come together as One Church of Jesus Christ from historical Lutheran and Reformed traditions to form a more effective ministry while preserving our heritage by continuing our affiliation with the United Church of Christ and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America under this constitution.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Article 1. Name and Incorporation

The name of this church shall be St John's Gernants Church located at 13 Gernants Church Road, Leesport, Pa. 19533.

For the purpose of this constitution and accompanying by-laws, the congregation of St John's Gernants Church is hereafter designated as "this congregation".

This congregation shall be incorporated under the laws of the state of Pennsylvania as one corporation operating for religious purposes with the intent of being so recognized as a religious organization under the United States constitution.

Article 2. Purpose

1. The avowed purpose of this church shall be to worship God, to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and to celebrate the sacraments; to realize Christian fellowship and unity with this church and the Church Universal; to render loving service toward humankind; and to strive for righteousness, justice, and peace.
2. The Church is a people created by God in Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit, called and sent to bear witness to God's creative, redeeming, and sanctifying activity in the world.
3. To participate in God's mission, this congregation as part of the Church shall:
 - (a) Worship God in proclamation of the Word and administration of the sacraments and through lives of prayer, praise, thanksgiving, witness, and service.
 - (b) Proclaim God's saving Gospel of justification by grace for Christ's sake through faith alone, according to the apostolic witness in the Holy Scripture, preserving and transmitting the Gospel faithfully to future generations.

(c) Carry out Christ's Great Commission by reaching out to all people to bring them to faith in Christ and by doing all ministries with a global awareness consistent with this understanding of God as Creator, redeemer, and sanctifier of all.

(d) Serve in response to God's love to meet human needs, caring for the sick and the aged, advocating dignity and justice for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among all nations, and standing with the poor and powerless, and committing to their needs.

(e) Nurture its members in the Word of God so as to grow in faith and hope and love, to see daily life as the primary setting for the exercise of their Christian calling, and to use the gifts of the Spirit for their life together and for their calling in the world.

(f) Manifest the unity given to the people of God by living together in the love of Christ and by joining with other Christians in prayer and action to express and preserve the unity which the Spirit gives.

4. To fulfill these purposes, this congregation shall:

(a) Provide services of worship at which the Word of God is preached and the sacraments are administered.

(b) Provide pastoral care and assist all members to participate in this ministry.

(c) Challenge, equip, and support all members in carrying out their calling in their daily lives and in this congregation.

(d) Teach the Word of God.

(e) Witness to the reconciling Word of God in Christ, reaching out to all people.

(f) Respond to human need, work for justice and peace, care for the sick and the suffering, and participate responsibly in society.

(g) Motivate its members to provide financial support for this congregation's ministry and the ministries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the United Church of Christ.

(h) Foster and participate in relationships with other congregations, the synod, and the church wide organization of The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

(i) Foster and participate in relationships with other congregations, the conference, and the church wide organization of the United Church of Christ.

(j) Foster and participate in ecumenical relationships consistent with church wide policy of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the United Church of Christ.

5. This congregation shall, from time to time, adopt a mission statement, which will provide specific direction for its programs.

6. This church shall preserve its Lutheran and Reformed traditional heritage through its continued affiliation with the United Church of Christ and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America by authority of this Constitution.

Article 3. Polity

1. Whereas this church shall be incorporated as one corporation operating for religious purposes, this church shall constitutionally be bound by an equal affiliation with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America and the United Church of Christ with respect to theology, certain administrative requirements, and this congregation's benevolence giving to the wider church. Any change in affiliation, including expanding affiliation with other denominations would require a constitutional amendment.
2. The government of this church is vested in its members, who exercise the right of control in its entire affairs subject, however, to the laws of Pennsylvania and of the United States relating to non-profit religious corporations.

Article 4. Nature of the Church

1. All power in the church and therefore in this congregation belongs to our Lord Jesus Christ, its head. All actions of this congregation are to be carried out under his rule and authority.
2. The Church exists both as an inclusive fellowship and as a local congregation gathered for worship and Christian service. Congregations find their fulfillment in the universal community of the Church, and the universal Church exists in and through congregations. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the United Church of Christ, therefore, derive their character and powers both from the sanction and representation of their congregations and from their inherent nature as an expression of the broader fellowship of the faithful. In length, it acknowledges itself to be in the historic continuity of the communion of saints: in breadth, it expresses the fellowship of believers and congregations in our day.

Article 5. Faith and Covenant

1. This church acknowledges as its sole Head, Jesus Christ, and confesses the Triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
2. This church confesses Jesus Christ as the Lord and Savior and the Gospel as the power of God for the salvation of all who believe.
 - (a) Jesus Christ is the Word of God incarnate, through whom everything was made and through whom life, death, and resurrection God fashions a new creation.
 - (b) The proclamation of God's message to us as both Law and Gospel is the Word of God, revealing judgement and mercy through word and deed, beginning with the Word in creation, continuing the history of Israel, and centering in all its fullness in the person and work of Jesus Christ.
 - (c) The canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the written Word of God. Inspired by God's Spirit speaking through their authors, they record and announce God's revelation centering in Jesus Christ. Through them God's Spirit speaks to us to create and sustain Christian faith and fellowship for service in the world.
3. This church accepts the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God and the authoritative source and norm of its proclamation, faith, and life.

4. This church acknowledges as brothers and sisters in Christ all who share in this confession. It looks to the Word of God in Scriptures, and to the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, to prosper its creative and redemptive work in the world. It claims as its own the faith of the historic Church expressed in the ancient creeds and reclaimed in the basic insights of the Protestant reformers. It affirms the responsibility of the church in each generation to make this faith its own. In accordance with the teaching of our lord and the practice prevailing among evangelical Christians, it recognizes two sacraments: Baptism and the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion.

5. This congregation accepts as true declarations of faith the Apostle's Creed, the Nicene Creed, the UCC Statement of Faith and the Athanasian Creed.

6. This congregation accepts the Unaltered Augsburg Confession as a true witness to the Gospel, acknowledging as one with it in faith and doctrine all churches that likewise accept the teachings of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession.

7. This congregation accepts the other confessional Writings in the Book of Concord, namely the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles and the Treatise, the Small Catechism, the Large Catechism, the Formula of Concord, the U.C.C. Statement of Faith, and the Heidelberg Catechism as further valid interpretations of the faith of the Church.

8. This congregation confesses the Gospel, recorded in the Holy Scriptures and confessed in the ecumenical creeds, Lutheran confessional writings, and Reformed tradition writings foundational to the United Church of Christ, as the power of God to create and sustain the Church for God's mission in the world.

9. COVENANT -We covenant one with another to seek and respond to the Word and the Will of God. We purpose to walk together in the ways of the Lord, made known and to be made known to us. We hold it to be the mission of this congregation to witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ in all the world, while worshipping God, and striving for truth, justice, and peace. As did our forebears, we depend on the Holy Spirit to lead and to empower us. We pray for the coming of the kingdom of God, and we look with faith toward the triumph of righteousness and eternal life.

Article 6. Powers of the Congregation

1. The powers of this congregation are those necessary to fulfill its purpose.

2. The powers of this congregation are vested in The Congregational Meeting called and conducted as provided in the constitution and by-laws.

3. Only such authority as is delegated to the Church Board or other organization units in this congregation's governing documents is recognized. All remaining authority is retained by this congregation. The congregation is authorized to:

(a) Call a pastor as is provided in Article 10.

(b) Terminate the call of a pastor as provided in Article 10.

(c) Call or terminate the call of associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers in conformity with the applicable policies of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and/or the United Church Christ.

(d) Approve the annual budget

- (e) Acquire real and personal property by gift, devise, purchase, or other lawful means.
- (f) Hold title to and use its property for any and all activities consistent with its purpose.
- (g) Sell, mortgage, lease, transfer, or otherwise dispose of its property by any lawful means.
- (h) Elect a Church Board and require them to carry out their duties in accordance with the constitution and by-laws.
- (i) Terminate its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the United Church of Christ.

4. This congregation, either directly or through its Church Board, shall choose from among its active members lay persons to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference annual meeting, as well as persons to represent it at meetings of any conferences, clusters, coalitions, or other area subdivisions of which it is a member. The number of persons to be elected by the congregation or Church Board and other qualifications shall be as prescribed in guidelines established by the synod or conference, as applicable.

Article 7. Church Affiliation

1. This congregation though incorporated as one corporation for religious purposes shall be equally affiliated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the United Church of Christ and therefore also be affiliated with Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod and Pennsylvania Southeast Conference or their successors. This congregation is therefore subject to the discipline of the affiliated organizations only to limits of the affiliation.
2. This congregation accepts the doctrinal statements* and agrees to the purposes of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the United Church of Christ and shall act in accordance with them. (* as summarized in Article Five - "Faith and Covenant")
3. This congregation acknowledges its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the United Church of Christ in which:
 - (a) This congregation agrees to be responsible for its life as a Christian community.
 - (b) This congregation pledges equal financial support and participation in the life and mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the United Church of Christ.
 - (c) This congregation agrees to call pastoral leadership from the clergy rosters of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the United Church of Christ in accordance with its call procedures and in accordance with the policies of the roster church organizations.
 - (d) This congregation agrees to consider associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers for call to other staff positions in accordance with applicable policies of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the United Church of Christ.
 - (e) This congregation agrees to file this constitution and any subsequent changes to this constitution as applicable with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the United Church of Christ to ascertain the provisions therein are within the range of acceptance for affiliation with these organizations.

4. Affiliation with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the United Church of Christ may be terminated as follows:

- (a) This congregation takes action to dissolve.
- (b) This congregation ceases to exist.
- (c) This congregation is removed from its affiliation with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and/or the United Church of Christ according to the applicable procedures of discipline for these organizations.
- (d) This congregation follows the procedure outlined herein in Article 7. Section 5.

5. This congregation may terminate its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and United Church of Christ by the following procedure:

- (a) A resolution indicating the desire of this congregation to terminate its relationship must be adopted at a legally called and conducted special meeting of this congregation by a two-thirds majority of the voting members present.
- (b) The secretary of this congregation shall submit a copy of the resolution to the synod bishop and conference minister and shall mail a copy of the resolution to voting members of this congregation. This notice shall be submitted within 10 days after the resolution has been adopted.
- (c) The synod bishop and the conference minister shall consult with this congregation within 90 days.
- (d) If this congregation, after consultation, still desires to terminate its relationship, such action may be taken at a legally called and conducted special meeting by a two-thirds majority of the voting members present, at which meeting the synod bishop and conference minister or their authorized representatives shall be present. Notice of the meeting shall be mailed to all voting members at least 4 weeks prior to meeting and shall be announced in church for two consecutive Sundays immediately preceding the service.
- (e) A certified copy of the resolution to terminate its relationship shall be sent to the synod bishop and conference minister at which time the relationship shall be terminated.
- (f) Notice of termination shall be published in the periodical of this congregation.
- (g) Termination of this congregation's relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and United Church of Christ is subject to review and approval by the Synod prior to termination.

6. If this congregation is considering relocation, it shall confer with the bishop of the synod and the conference minister or their designees where it is territorially located before any steps are taken leading to such action. The approval of the synod and conference to move to a new location shall be required before any such action is effected, if it is the intent to maintain affiliation with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the United Church of Christ.

Article 8. Property Ownership

1. If this congregation ceases to exist, title to un-disposed property shall pass jointly to the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference of the United Church of Christ.

2. If this congregation is removed from affiliation with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or the United Church of Christ by their action according to their procedure for discipline, title to all property shall continue to reside in this congregation.
3. If a two-thirds majority of the voting members of this congregation present at a regularly called and conducted special meeting of this congregation vote to affiliate with another church body, title to property shall continue to reside in this congregation. Before this congregation takes action to affiliate with another church body, it shall consult with the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod and the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference.

Article 9. Membership

1. Members of this congregation shall be those baptized persons on the roll of this congregation at the time that this constitution is adopted and those who are admitted thereafter and who have declared and maintain their membership in accordance with the provisions of this constitution and its by-laws.
2. Members shall be classified as baptized members, confirmed members, active members, in-active members, or associate members.
 - (a) Baptized members are those persons who have been received by the Sacrament of Holy Baptism in this congregation. Or, having been previously baptized in the name of the Triune God, have been received by certificate of transfer from other affiliate congregations or by affirmation of faith.
 - (b) Confirmed members are baptized persons who have been confirmed in this congregation, those who have been received by adult baptism or by transfer as confirmed members from other affiliate congregations, or baptized persons received by affirmation of faith.
 - (c) Active (voting) members are members who are confirmed and who have contributed and communed in current or preceding year. There is no minimum contribution. Special consideration may be given by the Church Board exempting from the contribution requirement those members unable to contribute. Active members have voting privileges.
 - (d) Inactive (non-voting) members are members who are confirmed and who have not contributed and communed in current or preceding year. Inactive members have no voting privileges.
 - (e) Associate members are members of another congregation who chose to be formally associated with this congregation through membership. Associate members have no voting privileges.
3. All members shall be eligible for pastoral care.
4. All applications for confirmed membership shall be submitted to the pastor who shall make the decision whether to accept the applicant for membership. The pastor will recommend application for membership to the church board.
5. It shall be the privilege and duty of members of this congregation to:
 - (a) Make regular use of the means of grace, both Word and sacraments.
 - (b) Live a Christian life in accordance with the Word of God and teachings of the Lutheran and United Church of Christ traditions.

(c) Support the work of this congregation, the synod, the conference and their church wide organizations through contributions of their time, abilities, and financial support as biblical stewards.

6. Membership in this congregation shall be terminated by any of the following:

(a) Death.

(b) Resignation.

(c) Transfer or release.

(d) Disciplinary action by the Church Board.

(e) Removal from the roll due to inactivity or failure to contribute and commune in current or preceding year.

(f) Special membership considerations can be granted by the board for circumstances such as attending college, military duty or other possibilities.

7. The process for removal from membership due to inactivity shall be as follows:

(a) If an active member fails to commune and contribute within the preceding year or the first three quarters of the current year, a letter shall be sent to that member in October encouraging that member to commune and contribute by the end of the year. Communion dates shall be provided in the letter along with a reminder that proof of communion at another church is acceptable to meet the communion membership requirement

(b) In the event the member has not contributed and communed by the end of the year, a letter shall be sent to the individual in January encouraging them to attend church) commune, and contribute, and advising them that failure to do so during the forthcoming year will place them in inactive status removing them from all routine church communication and all member privileges including their voting privileges. They shall continue to be eligible for pastoral care,

(c) Inactive members shall automatically be removed from membership rolls in January of the following year.

8. Since the church is the people of God, members of this congregation shall live righteous and Godly lives and labor faithfully to bring others to Christ. They shall take an active part in the life and work of the Church.

9. Active relationship to the Church shall include, but not necessarily be limited to:

(a) Regular attendance at divine worship.

(b) Devout use of the Holy Communion.

(c) Diligent observance of private devotions shall be encouraged.

(d) Liberal financial and moral support toward the maintenance of the church and the Church's benevolent endeavor.

(e) Sincere endeavor to apply the teachings of Jesus to all human relationships.

(f) Regular exercise of the right and duty to voice and vote in congregational meetings.

(g) Assuming such offices as the congregation may confer upon the member with diligence and zeal.

(This list is to be understood as suggestive and descriptive rather than normative)

10. Parents shall provide in cooperation with the Church adequate Christian training for their entire member household, and shall give due heed to the fulfillment of baptismal vows.

Article 10. The Pastor

1. Authority to call a pastor shall be in this congregation by at least a two-thirds majority ballot vote of active members present and voting at a meeting regularly called for that purpose. Before a pastoral search is initiated, the officers, or a committee elected by the church Board to recommend the call, shall seek the advice and help of the conference and synod.

2. Only a member of the clergy roster approved by the synod and conference as call candidates may be called as a pastor of this congregation.

3. Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and United Church of Christ,

(a) Every ordained minister shall:

(1) Preach the Word

(2) Administer the sacraments

(3) Conduct public worship

(4) Provide pastoral care; and

(5) Speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, calling for justice and proclaiming God's love for the world.

(6) Attend all board meetings

(b) Each ordained minister with a congregational call shall, within the congregation

(1) Offer instruction, confirm, marry, visit the sick and distressed, and bury the dead

(2) Supervise all schools and organizations of this congregation;

(3) Install elected members of the church Board; and

(4) With the church Board, administer discipline.

(c) Every pastor shall:

(1) Strive to extend the Kingdom of God in the community, in the nation, and abroad;

(2) Seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel;

(3) Impart knowledge of this church and its wider ministry through distribution of its periodicals and other publications; and

(4) Endeavor to increase the support given by the congregation to the work of the church wide organizations of the United Church of Christ and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America through the Penn Southeast Conference and the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod.

4. The specific duties of the pastor, compensation, and other matters pertaining to the service of the pastor shall be included in a letter of call, which shall be attested by the synod and the conference.
5. (a) The call of a congregation, when accepted by a pastor, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment, which, except in the case of death of the pastor, shall be terminated only following consultation with the synod and the conference and for the following reasons:
- (1) Mutual agreement (between Pastor and Board) to terminate the call or the completion of a call for a specific term;
 - (2) Resignation of the pastor, which shall become effective, unless otherwise agreed, 30 days after the date on which it was submitted;
 - (3) Inability to conduct the pastoral office effectively in the congregation in view of local conditions, without reflection on the competence or the moral and spiritual character of the pastor;
 - (4) The physical or mental incapacity of the pastor;
 - (5) Disqualification of the pastor through discipline on grounds of doctrine, morality, or continued neglect of duty;
 - (6) The dissolution of the congregation; or
 - (7) Suspension of the congregation as a result of discipline proceedings.

(NOTE: There are specific differences in the polity of the ELCA and the UCC. These differences will affect the way in which the matters of investigation and discipline will be dealt with depending on the denominational standing of the Pastor in question. The language that follows is not to be understood as imposing a course of action on the synod, conference or national expression of the ELCA or UCC where it goes against specific matters of polity. These important matters will be dealt with in all seriousness according to the established practices of the synod or conference of the denomination involved)

- (b) When allegations of physical or mental incapacity of the pastor or ineffective conduct of the pastoral office have come to the attention of the synod and conference leadership, the synod and conference at their sole discretion may, or when such allegations have been brought to their attention by the church Board or by a petition signed by at least one third of the active members of the congregation, the synod and conference leadership shall investigate such conditions personally in the company with a committee of two ordained ministers and a lay person.
- (c) In case of alleged physical or incapacity, competent medical testimony shall be obtained. When such disability is evident the synod and conference leadership with the advice of the committee shall declare the pastorate vacant. Upon the restoration of a disabled pastor to health, the synod and conference leadership shall take steps to enable the pastor to resume the ministry, either in the congregation last served or in another field of labor.

(d) In case of alleged local difficulties that imperil effective functioning of the congregation, all concerned persons shall be heard, after which the synod and conference leadership together with the previously described investigating committee, shall decide on the course of action to be recommended to the pastor and the congregation. If they agree to carry out such recommendations, no further action shall be taken by the synod and conference. If either party fails to assent, the congregation may dismiss the pastor by a two-thirds majority vote at a regularly called meeting after consultation with the synod and conference leadership.

(e) If, in the course of the aforementioned proceedings, the committee concludes that there may be grounds for disciplinary action, the committee shall make recommendations concerning disciplinary action to the synod and conference leadership who may bring charges, in accordance the provisions of the United Church of Christ and/or Evangelical Lutheran Church in America governance.

(f) If, following appointment of the aforementioned committee, it should become apparent that the pastoral office cannot be conducted effectively in the congregation being served by the ordained minister due to local conditions, the synod and conference leadership may temporarily suspend the pastor from service in the congregation without prejudice and with pay at no cost to the congregation.

6. At a time of pastoral vacancy, an interim pastor shall be appointed by the conference and synod with the consent of this congregation or the church Board. (According to UCC polity, the conference will consult with the congregation and suggest possible interim pastors but the congregation determines who will serve. The conference does not appoint an interim.)

7. During the period of service, an interim pastor shall have the rights and duties in the congregation of a regularly called pastor and may delegate the same in part to a supply pastor with the consent of synod and conference and this congregation or church Board. The interim pastor and any ordained pastor providing assistance shall refrain from exerting influence in the selection of a pastor.

8. This congregation shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to a former pastor before calling a successor. A pastor shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to this congregation.

9. When a pastor is called to serve in company with another pastor or pastors, the privileges and responsibilities of each pastor shall be specified in documents to accompany the call and to be drafted in consultation with the synod and conference leadership, the pastors, and the church Board. As occasion requires, the documents may be revised through a similar consultation at a later date.

10. With the approval of the synod and the conference this congregation may call a pastor only for a specific term. Details of such calls shall be in writing setting forth the purpose and conditions involved. Prior to completion of a term, the synod and conference leadership shall meet with the pastor and representatives of the congregation for a review of the call. Such a call may also be terminated before its expiration in accordance with aforementioned provisions for termination of a call.

11. The pastor shall keep accurate parochial records of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, communicants, members received, members dismissed, or members excluded from the congregation, and shall submit a summary of such statistics annually to the synod and conference as required.

12. The pastor(s) shall submit a report of his or her ministry to the synod and conference leadership at least 90 days prior to each regular synodical or conference annual meeting.

Article 11. Congregational Meetings

1. The annual meeting of this congregation shall be held on a Sunday in June (To be determined by the Church Board) to approve the annual operating budget.
2. The annual Financial Report shall be published by the 1st Sunday in August. The Board shall schedule a congregational meeting to review.
3. Special meetings can be called by the Pastor and the Board and shall be called upon receipt of a congregational petition signed by 20% of the active members.
4. A quorum is required to conduct business at a congregational meeting. A quorum shall consist of 20% of active members.
5. Congregational meetings shall be announced at regular Sunday worship 2 consecutive Sundays prior to the scheduled meeting and shall be announced by mail notification 4 weeks prior to the scheduled meeting.
6. There shall be no voting by proxy. Members must be present to exercise their vote.
7. Congregational meetings shall be conducted in accordance with the current version of Roberts Rules of Order.
8. Board members shall be elected by the congregation whereas officers shall be elected by the Board.
9. Matters involving changes to the Constitution or Bylaws require a two-thirds majority vote. All other matters require a simple majority vote.

Article 12. Officers

1. The officers of this congregation shall be President, Vice-President, Recording Secretary, and Treasurer. All officers must be active members of this congregation. Denominational delineation will cease upon adoption.
2. The Treasurer can be appointed by the Board from the congregation.
3. The Pastor shall be a non-voting member of the Board.
4. No officer shall hold more than one office at a time.
5. Duties of the officers shall be specified by the Bylaws.

Article 13. Church Board

1. The voting membership of the Church Board shall consist of not more than nine active members of the congregation. Any active member of the congregation may be elected to the Board, subject only to the limitation on length of continuous service permitted in that office. A member's place on the Board shall be declared vacant by the Board if the member ceases to be an active member of the congregation or is absent

from four successive regular Board meetings without cause. Member will be engaged by the Executive Committee of the Board to determine if the absence is of just cause.

2. The members of the Board shall be elected at a legally called congregational meeting in December. Their term of office shall be for 3 years, with the term of office beginning January 1st and ending December 31st of the year following their election. Newly elected Board members shall be installed at the first worship service following their election. In the first year following adoption of this Constitution, three members shall be elected for 3 years, three members for 2 years, and three members for 1 year, to ensure equal rotation in succeeding years.

3. Should a member's place on the Board be declared vacant, the Board shall elect, by majority vote, a successor until the next annual meeting.

4. Board members shall not be elected to serve more than two consecutive full terms and must be off the Board for at least one year before being elected to return to the Board.

5. The church Board shall have general oversight of the life and activities of this congregation, and in particular its worship life, to the end that everything be done in accordance with the Word of God and reflect faith and practice of the United Church of Christ and Evangelical Lutheran Church in America traditions.

6. The duties of the Church Board shall include the following:

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

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

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

(d) To maintain supportive relationships with the pastor(s) and staff and help them annually to evaluate the fulfillment of their calling and employment.

(e) To be examples individually and corporately of the style of life and ministry expected of all baptized persons.

(f) To promote a congregational climate of peace and goodwill. as differences and conflicts arise, to endeavor to foster mutual understanding.

(g) To arrange for pastoral service during the sickness or absence of a pastor.

(h) To emphasize partnership with the synod and conference and church wide units of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and United Church of Christ.

(i) To recommend and encourage as applicable the use of program resources produced and approved by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and United Church of Christ.

(j) To seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel.

7. The church Board shall be responsible for the financial and property matters of this congregation.

(a) The church Board shall be responsible for maintaining and protecting the property of this congregation and its business and fiscal affairs. It shall have the powers and be subject to the obligations that pertain to such boards under the laws of the State of Pennsylvania, except as otherwise provided herein.

(b) The Board at its discretion may appoint trustees or a property manager to manage the day-to-day property matters. Duties of those appointed to this position shall be described in the Bylaws.

(c) The church Board shall prepare an annual budget for adoption by this congregation, shall supervise the expenditure of funds in accordance therewith following its adoption at the December annual congregational meeting. The budget shall include this congregation's full-indicated share in support of wider ministries carried out by the United Church of Christ and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

(d) The Board shall be authorized to spend in any budget year unbudgeted monies not to exceed \$7000.00. This includes entering into any contracts not included in the budget. Unforeseen major expenditures not budgeted or spending in excess of the \$7000.00 shall require congregational approval at a special meeting called for that purpose.

(e) The church Board shall not have the authority to buy, sell, or encumber real property unless specifically authorized to do so by a meeting of the congregation.

(f) The church Board shall ascertain that the financial affairs of this congregation are being conducted efficiently, giving particular attention to the prompt payment of financial obligations and to the regular forwarding of benevolence monies to the synod and conference treasuries.

(g) The church Board shall be responsible for this congregation's investments and its total insurance program.

8. The church Board shall see that the provisions of this constitution, its bylaws, and the continuing resolutions are carried out.

9. The church Board shall provide for an annual review of the membership roster.

10. The church Board shall be responsible for the employment and supervision of salaried lay workers of this congregation.

11. The church Board shall submit a comprehensive report annually to this congregation.

12. The church Board shall normally meet once a month. Special meetings may be called by the pastor or the president, and shall be called by the president at the request of at least one-half of its members. Notice of each special meeting shall be given to those entitled to be present.

13. A quorum for the transaction of business shall consist of a majority of the members of the church Board.

Article 14. Congregational Committees

1. The officers of this congregation and the pastor shall constitute the Executive Committee.
2. Elders and/or Deacons, along with the pastor shall constitute the Spiritual Committee.
 - (a) The Spiritual Committee shall exercise the spiritual oversight of the entire congregation.
 - (b) The Spiritual Committee shall administer the discipline of the Church.
 - (c) The pastor shall be the chairperson of the Spiritual Committee. If there is no pastor, the Lead Elder shall chair the Spiritual Committee.
 - (d) Together with the pastor, the Spiritual Committee shall give special concern to the oversight of the Confirmation program for youth and adults:
3. When a pastoral vacancy occurs; a Call Committee of six active members shall be elected by the church Board. Term of office will terminate upon installation of the newly called pastor.
4. Other committees of this congregation may be formed, as the need arises, by decision of the church Board. Such committees may include but are not limited to Worship and Music, Stewardship, Property, Finance, Evangelism, Personnel, and Christian Education.
5. Duties of committees of this congregation shall be specified in the By-Laws.
6. Minutes of committee meetings shall be maintained. Periodic reports of committee activities shall be presented to the church Board.

Article 15. Organizations within the Congregation

1. All organizations within this congregation shall exist to aid it in ministering to the members of this congregation and to all persons who can be reached with the gospel of Christ. As outgrowths and expressions of this congregation's life, the organizations are subject to its oversight and direction. This congregation shall determine their policies, guide their activities, and receive reports concerning their membership, work and finance.
2. Such organizations may include but are not limited to senior citizens groups, kitchen catering services, youth groups, and the church Sunday school.
3. Special interest groups other than officially recognized UCC or Lutheran organizations may be organized only after the authorization of the Church Board.
4. Minutes of organization meetings shall be maintained. Periodic reports of organization activities shall be presented to the church Board.
5. Church Board endorsement of church organizations shall be reflected in Article 20, Continuing Resolutions.

Article 16. Discipline of Members

1. Denial of the Christian faith is described in this constitution, conduct grossly unbecoming a member of the Church of Christ, or persistent troublemaking in this congregation are sufficient cause for discipline of a member. Prior to disciplinary action, reconciliation will be attempted following Matthew 18:15-17, proceeding through these successive steps:
 - (a) Private admonition by the pastor.
 - (b) Admonition by the pastor in the presence of the Spiritual Committee.
 - (c) Citation to appear before the church Board.
2. The process for discipline of a member of the congregation shall be governed as prescribed in this Constitution, By-Laws, and Continuing Resolutions. A member charged with an offense shall appear before the church Board after having received a written notice, specifying the exact charges that have been made against the member, at least 10 days prior to the meeting.
3. Members of the church Board who participate in the preparation of written charges or who present evidence or testimony in the hearing before the church board are disqualified from voting upon the question of guilt of the accused member. Should the allegations be sustained by a two-thirds majority vote of the Board, who are not disqualified but are present and voting, *and* renewed admonition prove ineffectual, the Board shall impose one of the following disciplinary actions:
 - (a) Censure before the Board or congregation.
 - (b) Suspension from membership for a definite period of time.
 - (c) Exclusion from membership in this congregation.

Disciplinary actions (b) and (c) shall be delivered to the member in writing.

Article 17. St John's Gernants Church Cemetery

1. This congregation recognizes the existence of St John's Gernants Cemetery Company, as a committee of St John's Gernants Church, for the purpose of holding suitable ground for the burial of the dead with the power of ornamenting and protecting the same, and to maintain a perpetual care fund for future care, management, and general supervision of such cemetery.
2. Pursuant to cemetery bylaws this congregation shall elect two active members each year to serve a 3-year term on the cemetery Board.
3. St John's Gernants Cemetery Company shall consist of a minimum of 5 but not more than 9 active members of the congregation.

Article 18. Bylaws

1. This congregation may adopt bylaws but no bylaws may conflict with this constitution.
2. Bylaws may be adopted or amended at any legally called meeting of this congregation with a quorum present by a majority vote of those active members present and voting.
3. Changes to the bylaws may be proposed by any active members provided, however, that such additions

or amendments to the bylaws be submitted in writing to the church Board at least 90 days before a regular or special congregational meeting called for that purpose and that the church Board notify the members of the proposal with its recommendation at least 30 days in advance of the congregational meeting.

4. Approved changes to the bylaws shall be sent to the Synod and Conference by the secretary of the congregation.

Article 19. Amendments

1. Amendments to this constitution may be proposed by at least 10 active members or by the church Board. Proposals must be filed with the church Board 90 days before formal consideration by this congregation at its regular or special meeting called for that purpose. The church Board shall notify members of the proposal with the church Board's recommendation at least 30 days in advance of the meeting.

2. A proposed amendment to this constitution shall:

(a) Be approved at a properly called meeting according to this constitution by a majority vote of those present and voting.

(b) Be ratified without change at the next annual meeting by a two-thirds majority vote of those present and voting.

(c) Have the effective date included in the resolution and noted in the constitution.

3. Any amendment to this constitution shall be sent to the Conference and the Synod. The amendment shall become effective within 120 days of date of receipt of the notice by the Synod and Conference unless the Synod or Conference informs this congregation that the amendment is in conflict with their constitution and / or bylaws and jeopardizes continued affiliation with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and / or the United Church of Christ.

Article 20. Continuing Resolutions:

1. The church Board may enact continuing resolutions, which describe the function of the various committees or organizations in this congregation.

2. Continuing resolutions shall be enacted or amended by two-thirds vote of all members of the church Board.

Article 21. Indemnification:

1. Consistent with the provision of the laws under which the congregation is incorporated, this congregation may adopt provisions providing indemnification for each person who, by reason of fact that such person is or was a Church Board member, officer, employee, agent, or other member of any committee of this congregation, was or is threatened to be made a party to any threatened, pending, or completed civil, criminal, administrative, arbitration, or investigative proceeding.

Article 22. Rules of Order:

1. Robert's Rules of Order shall be the parliamentary authority for all matters of procedure not specifically covered by this Constitution and / or Bylaws.