

# **Constitution and Bylaws of Christ Church Otsego, Minnesota**

## **Preamble**

We, followers of Jesus Christ, responding to the Call of the Holy Spirit through the Gospel, desiring to unite together to proclaim the Word, administer the Sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion, and carry out the mission of the Church, do hereby adopt this Constitution and commit ourselves to be governed by its provisions, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

## **Chapter 1**

### **Name and Incorporation**

1. The name of this congregation shall be Christ Church.
2. For the purpose of this Constitution and Bylaws, the congregation of Christ Church located in Otsego, Minnesota, is designated “this congregation.”
3. This congregation is incorporated under the laws of the State of Minnesota.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Statement of Faith**

1. This congregation confesses the Triune God; Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
2. This congregation accepts the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God and authoritative source and norm of its proclamation, faith and life.
3. This congregation accepts the Apostle’s, Nicene and Athanasian Creeds as true declarations of the historic faith of the Christian Church.
4. This congregation is committed to the transforming power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to redeem, reconcile and reclaim all of creation.
5. This congregation is committed to the power of prayer and partnership with others for the sake of unity in the Church and witness to the world.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Nature of the Church and Affiliation**

1. This congregation exists both as a local expression of the “body of Christ” and as a part of the universal Church made up of every believer in Jesus Christ.
2. This congregation acknowledges that Jesus Christ is the head of the Church and commits itself to carry out its mission, ministry and decisions in submission and obedience to His authority.
3. This congregation acknowledges and celebrates its foundation and history within the evangelical Lutheran expression of the Church.
4. This congregation may officially affiliate with any denomination, ministry association or organization that is in line with its Statement of Faith and is deemed by this congregation to contribute to the fulfillment of its mission and ministry.

5. This congregation may adopt or terminate its official affiliation with any denomination, ministry association or organization at a Special Meeting by a two-thirds majority of the Voting Members. (Chapter 6)
6. This congregation shall always retain title to its property and all assets regardless of any decision to affiliate or terminate its official relationship with any denomination, ministry association or organization.
7. This congregation may choose to terminate its own existence or merge with another congregation at a Special Meeting by a two-thirds majority of the Voting Members.
8. The title to real property and the distribution of all other assets shall be recommended by the Church Council and authorized by a majority of the Voting Members at the same Special Meeting at which the vote is taken to terminate or merge.

## Chapter 4

### **Authority of this Congregation**

1. The authority of this congregation is that which is necessary to fulfill its mission and ministry according to the Scriptures.
2. This congregation delegates authority to the Church Council, Senior Pastor and other individuals and ministry teams only as recognized in this Constitution and Bylaws. All remaining authority is retained by this congregation.
3. The authority of this congregation is primarily exercised at the Annual Meeting or Special Meeting as provided for in this Constitution and Bylaws. (Chapter 6)
4. This congregation shall have authority to:
  - a. Extend a Letter of Call or terminate a Letter of Call of an ordained pastor. (Chapter 7)
  - b. Elect the members of the Church Council. (Chapter 8)
  - c. Approve the annual Mission and Ministry Budget.
  - d. Acquire and dispose of real property and all assets, hold title to and use its property and all assets for any activities consistent with its mission and ministry.
  - e. Make any legal agreements as necessary to fulfill the mission and ministry of this congregation.
  - f. Adopt or terminate its official affiliation with any denomination, ministry association or organization. (Chapter 3)
  - g. Determine Membership and exercise the spiritual discipline of its members. (Chapters 5 and 9)
  - h. Amend this Constitution and Bylaws. (Chapter 10)

## Chapter 5

### **Membership**

1. Members of this congregation shall be those recognized as members at the time this Constitution and Bylaws is adopted and those admitted in the future according to the following criteria:
  - a. Baptized Members: those persons who have been received into membership by the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, regardless of age. The baptism of any person shall not imply membership in this congregation for that person's family members. An ordained pastor of this congregation shall officiate at the Sacrament of Holy Baptism unless otherwise designated.

- b. Confirmed Members: those persons who have been received into membership by public confession of faith in Jesus Christ which includes affirmation of the Statement of Faith of Christ Church included in this Constitution and Bylaws. (Chapter 2) Confirmed Members shall complete a course of study determined by the Senior Pastor or designee and shall be considered adult members of this congregation.
  - c. Official certification of Baptized Members and Confirmed Members of this congregation shall be made by the Senior Pastor or designee.
  - d. Persons seeking a transfer of membership from another congregation shall fulfill the same criteria of membership stated in this Constitution and Bylaws.
  - e. Accurate Membership Records of this congregation shall be maintained by the Senior Pastor or designee.
2. A Voting Member of this congregation shall be defined as any person who is a Confirmed Member of this congregation at the time of any Annual Meeting or Special Meeting, unless a specific action requires that Voting Members must be eighteen (18) years of age or older.
  3. Membership of this congregation shall be terminated by:
    - a. Death.
    - b. Resignation.
    - c. Disciplinary action. (Chapter 9)
    - d. Inactivity for a period of one year, subject to personal contact and the action of the Church Council.

## Chapter 6

### **Annual Meeting and Special Meetings**

1. This congregation shall conduct its Official Business through legally called meetings of the Voting Members of this congregation as described in this Constitution and Bylaws, hereafter designated as “Annual Meeting” or “Special Meeting.”
2. Official Business refers to specific resolutions or official actions of this congregation requiring a vote as prescribed in this Constitution and Bylaws.
3. All official resolutions and actions of this congregation shall be recorded in the Meeting Minutes as necessary to fulfill legal requirements and maintain a record of congregational actions. The Meeting Minutes shall be recorded by the Church Council Secretary, reviewed by the Church Council, and read out loud and approved at the next Annual Meeting or Special Meeting.
4. Notice of the Annual Meeting or any Special Meetings of this congregation, including the date, time, location and Agenda along with any specific resolutions or official actions to be taken at the meeting, shall be given in both written and verbal form at all services of worship that take place on the two consecutive Sundays preceding the meeting.
5. Notice of the Annual Meeting or any Special Meetings of this congregation, including the date, time, location and Agenda along with any specific resolutions or official actions to be taken at the meeting, may also be given by mail or other forms of communication to all Voting Members of this congregation at least ten (10) days in advance of the date of the meeting as determined appropriate by the Church Council.
6. The Church Council, may at its discretion, schedule Open Forums or utilize additional means of communication to provide information and opportunities for discussion prior to the Annual Meeting or Special Meetings of this congregation.

7. The Annual Meeting of this congregation shall be held during the month of January at a date, time and location determined by the Church Council. The Agenda shall be determined by the Church Council and shall usually include:
  - a. Call to Order.
  - b. Announcement of official Meeting Quorum.
  - c. Opening Prayer.
  - d. Reading and approval of Meeting Minutes from the previous Annual Meeting or Special Meetings.
  - e. Mission and Ministry Reports by Pastors and Staff.
  - f. Financial Reports by Treasurer or designee.
  - g. Presentation and approval of the annual Mission and Ministry Budget.
  - h. Election of Church Council members.
  - i. Election of Nominating Team members.
  - j. Other Official Business as announced in advance of the meeting.
  - k. Other Business at the discretion of the Chair.
  - l. Closing Prayer.
  - m. Adjournment.
8. A Special Meeting of this congregation may be called by any ordained pastor of this congregation, the Church Council, or by written request from ten percent (10%) of the Voting Members submitted to the Church Council at least thirty (30) days in advance of the meeting. The call for a Special Meeting shall specify a date, time, location and Agenda for the meeting along with any specific resolutions or official actions to be taken. No other business shall be conducted at a Special Meeting.
9. The Church Council President, or Church Council Vice-President in the absence of the President, shall serve as the Chair and preside at the Annual Meeting or Special Meetings of this congregation. Official Business shall not be conducted in the absence of both the President and Vice-President, regardless of a quorum of members present.
10. The Annual Meeting or Special Meetings of this congregation shall include all ordained pastors and staff unless mutually agreed upon with the Church Council in advance of the meeting.
11. Ten percent (10%) of the Voting Members of this congregation shall constitute an official Meeting Quorum. The number of Voting Members required for an official Meeting Quorum shall be determined in advance of the meeting by the Church Council Secretary. The official Meeting Quorum shall be certified at the Annual Meeting or Special Meetings by the Church Council Secretary and communicated to the Chair. No official business shall be conducted at the Annual Meeting or Special Meetings until an official Meeting Quorum has been certified and announced to the Voting Members by the Chair.
12. Non-voting members and special guests may attend the Annual Meeting or Special Meetings of this congregation at the discretion of the Chair.
13. All Official Business of this congregation shall be by majority vote of the Voting Members present and voting unless otherwise specified in this Constitution and Bylaws.
14. A Counting Team of no less than three (3) Voting Members shall be appointed by the Chair as necessary to count, record and report official ballot votes of this congregation at the Annual Meeting or Special Meetings. Vote totals shall be recorded in the Meeting Minutes by the Church Council Secretary.

15. Voting Members must be present and voting at the time an official vote of this congregation. Voting Members may not cast ballots in absentia or by proxy.
16. Blank or mis-marked ballots, as determined by the Counting Team, shall not be counted in any official vote.
17. The Annual Meeting or Special Meetings of this congregation may be “continued” at a time, place and location determined by a two-thirds majority vote. This motion shall be received at the discretion of the Chair who shall consider the best interests of this congregation. A new official Meeting Quorum of Voting Members must be established at the “continued” meeting.
18. Robert’s Rules of Order, latest edition, shall govern parliamentary procedure of the Annual Meeting or Special Meetings of this congregation. A Parliamentarian may be appointed by the Chair.

## Chapter 7

### **The Pastor**

1. This congregation has authority to extend a Letter of Call to any pastor of its own choosing who affirms the Statement of Faith included in this Constitution and Bylaws. (Chapter 2)
2. A pastor of this congregation shall be an Ordained Minister who has met commonly held standards for clergy who are recognized and/or licensed as Ministers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
3. The qualifications of a pastor called by this congregation may include a seminary degree, certification or endorsement by any denomination, ministry association or organization with whom this congregation chooses to affiliate, which also affirms the Statement of Faith included in this Constitution and Bylaws.
4. This congregation shall maintain its authority to ordain persons prepared for ministry through the “laying on of hands” as prescribed in the Scriptures.
5. This congregation may use the term “pastor” to describe non-ordained staff that functions in the role of pastor.
6. The authority to extend a Letter of Call to an ordained pastor resides in this congregation by a two-thirds majority ballot vote at a Special Meeting called for this purpose. (Chapter 6)
7. The process for identifying pastoral candidates shall be determined by the Pastoral Call Team who is appointed by the Church Council. (Chapter 8)
8. When a Letter of Call is extended to an ordained pastor it implies a continuing mutual relationship with this congregation, unless a specific Term of Call is agreed upon.
9. The Letter of Call of an ordained pastor to this congregation shall be terminated automatically by:
  - a. Death of the pastor.
  - b. Mutual agreement.
  - c. Resignation of the pastor.
  - d. Merger with another congregation.
  - e. Dissolution of this congregation.

10. The Letter of Call of an ordained pastor to this congregation may be terminated by this congregation, following an appropriate period of prayer and consultation that shall include the use of outside resources, by two-thirds majority ballot vote at a Special Meeting called for this purpose. Reasons to terminate the Letter of Call of an ordained pastor may include:
  - a. Physical or mental incapacity.
  - b. Disqualification on the basis of false doctrine, immorality or continued neglect of duty.
  - c. Persistent strife, disruption and disunity in this congregation that is caused or supported by the pastor.
  - d. A refusal to submit to the authority of this congregation and Church Council as prescribed in this Constitution and Bylaws.
  - e. Inability to continue to conduct the duties of the Letter of Call in this congregation as a result of local conditions which do not reflect on the competence or the moral and spiritual character of the pastor.
11. Duties of the pastor and annual compensation shall be determined in the initial Letter of Call in consultation with the Pastoral Call Team and the Church Council and shall be consistent with the authority and responsibilities determined in this Constitution and Bylaws.
12. The ordained pastor who is the Senior Pastor shall:
  - a. Conduct worship, preach the Word and administer the Sacraments according to the Scriptures and provide for others to fulfill these duties as authorized or when no ordained minister is present.
  - b. Serve as a non-voting member of the Church Council.
  - c. Provide the overall vision for the mission and ministry of this congregation in prayer and consultation with the other ordained pastors, staff, Church Council and congregational members.
  - d. Provide oversight and supervision to the other ordained pastors of this congregation and provide for an Annual Review of their duties and compensation.
  - e. Provide oversight and have access to all official records and documents of this congregation including membership, giving, financial and legal.
  - f. Retain the authority to hire and terminate all non-ordained staff of this congregation following appropriate consultation with the Church Council.
  - g. Serve as the Chair of the Pastoral Call Team when it is the desire of this congregation to extend a Letter of Call to another ordained pastor. (Chapter 8)
  - h. Serve as the Chair of the Nominating Team. (Chapter 8)
  - i. Participate in an Annual Review process conducted by the Church Council.
13. Other ordained pastors may be extended a Letter of Call by this congregation to positions of Associate Pastor, Executive Pastor, Youth Pastor and other titles and positions as determined to best serve the mission and ministry of this congregation. Their duties and compensation shall be determined in initial conversation with the Pastoral Call Team and the Church Council and shall be reviewed and updated as part of an Annual Review process provided for by the Senior Pastor.
  - a. Any ordained pastor shall have access to communicate needs and concerns to the Church Council in the event that conflict arises with the Senior Pastor.

## Chapter 8

### Church Council and Officers

1. The elected governing board of this congregation shall be called the Church Council.
2. The Church Council shall transact the legal and financial business of this congregation unless otherwise specified in this Constitution and Bylaws or by vote of this congregation at an official meeting.
3. The Church Council shall provide strategic leadership for this congregation that contributes to fulfilling its vision, mission and ministry.
4. The Church Council shall consist of no less than seven and no more than nine Voting Members of this congregation elected to serve three-year terms (3) by a vote of this congregation at its Annual Meeting.
5. Church Council members may be re-elected to succeeding three-year terms (3) following prayer, consultation and continued recommendation by the Nominating Team. There shall be no limit to length of service.
6. The Church Council shall elect its own Officers who serve as Officers of this Congregation. These Officers shall also function as the Church Council Executive Team along with the Senior Pastor. These Officers shall be elected to one-year terms (1) during the month of February each year, and if re-elected, may serve as any Officer for the length of their Church Council tenure. Officers shall include:
  - a. President
  - b. Vice-President
  - c. Secretary
7. The Church Council meetings shall be conducted by the President, or the Vice-President in the absence of the President, and shall make all decisions on the basis of prayerful consensus, unless a recorded vote is determined necessary by the entire Church Council to fulfill a particular responsibility, legal or otherwise.
8. The Church Council shall normally conduct two meetings per month unless otherwise agreed upon by the Church Council members.
9. Church Council members shall maintain faithful attendance. Any Church Council member who has three (3) or more unexcused Church Council meeting absences in a calendar year shall meet with the Church Council President and the Senior Pastor to discuss their ongoing commitment. Further unexcused absences from Church Council meetings shall lead to dismissal from the Church Council upon agreement of the Council President and the Senior Pastor.
10. In the event of the dismissal or resignation of a Church Council member from the Church Council, the Church Council shall appoint a replacement to complete the remainder of the vacated term.
11. A quorum to conduct Official Business is a majority of Church Council members, regardless of the total size of the Church Council. Official Business shall not be conducted in the absence of both the President and Vice-President, regardless of a quorum of members present.
12. Church Council meetings are open to any member of this congregation unless announced at the worship services on the previous Sunday. Church Council meetings shall include the Senior Pastor unless otherwise agreed upon. Other ordained pastors may attend Church Council meetings as requested by the Church Council or the pastor.
13. No Church Council meetings shall take place unless all the members of the Church Council and the Senior Pastor have been properly informed in advance of the meeting.

14. The Church Council Secretary shall record Church Council Meeting Minutes which shall be regularly reviewed, approved and maintained by the Church Council as a record of Official Business and be available to congregational members upon request.
15. The Church Council shall provide primary oversight, accountability, partnership and support for the Senior Pastor of this congregation, which shall include a formal Annual Review process.
16. The Church Council shall partner with the Senior Pastor, other ordained pastors, staff and congregational members to accomplish the mission and ministry of this congregation. This partnership shall include:
  - a. Promote the overall vision and mission of this congregation.
  - b. Oversee the administration of this congregation.
  - c. Oversee all organizations and ministries within this congregation.
  - d. Appoint Task Forces and Ministry Teams as necessary.
  - e. Appoint delegates as needed to official meetings of denominations, ministry associations or organizations with whom this congregation is affiliated.
  - f. Promote mission partnerships both locally and globally.
  - g. Encourage the involvement of all members of this congregation in worship, learning, witness, service and financial support.
  - h. Provide regular opportunities for communication and planning including retreats, open forums, and ministry and financial updates.
  - i. Provide for and regularly update a congregational Policy Manual.
  - j. Oversee an Annual Review process for all pastors and staff including duties and compensation.
  - k. Consult with the Senior Pastor regarding the hiring or termination of non-ordained staff.
17. The Church Council shall oversee the collection of offerings, finances and expenditures of this congregation, maintaining integrity and transparency in all of its actions. This oversight shall include:
  - a. Appoint or hire a Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer and Financial Secretary, as needed to maintain the finances of this congregation. Determine their duties, terms of office and lines of accountability. Request and review financial reports and oversee the maintenance of financial records. The Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer and Financial Secretary shall not be members of the Church Council.
  - b. Appoint a Financial Counting Team Chair to oversee a Financial Counting Team that shall count and record offerings and other income and make bank deposits.
  - c. Open bank accounts, authorize official signers and transfer money between accounts.
  - d. Provide regular communication and reporting to this congregation about offerings and expenditures.
  - e. Develop the annual Mission and Ministry Budget and present it at the Annual Meeting for congregation approval. Monitor the Mission and Ministry Budget throughout the year and make appropriate adjustments related to offerings and expenditures.
  - f. Initiate and oversee Special Funding programs which may include Capital Campaigns, debt reduction or special needs outside of the annual Mission and Ministry Budget.
  - g. Hire consultants as determined helpful or necessary to facilitate the mission and ministry of this congregation.
  - h. Provide for an Audit of the financial records of this congregation at least every two years by someone who is not currently serving as a member of the Church Council, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer or Financial Secretary.

18. The Church Council shall recommend, and this congregation shall elect at its Annual Meeting, a Nominating Team consisting of three to five Voting Members of this congregation, one of whom may be a member of the Church Council, plus the Senior Pastor who shall serve as Chair.
  - a. Nominating Team members shall serve three-year terms (3), once renewable.
  - b. The Nominating Team shall prayerfully identify, interview and recommend candidates for election by this congregation to the Church Council.
  - c. No nominations for Church Council positions or Nominating Team positions shall be received from the floor of an Annual Meeting or Special Meeting.
  - d. The Nominating Team shall interview and recommend current Church Council Members for re-election to succeeding three-year terms (3) following prayer and consultation.
19. During the vacancy of an ordained pastor, the Church Council may appoint an Interim Pastor and determine duties and compensation.
20. During the vacancy of an ordained pastor, the Church Council shall appoint a Pastoral Call Team to identify, interview and recommend a pastoral candidate for a Letter of Call.
  - a. This Pastoral Call Team shall consist of between six and eight Voting Members of the congregation, two of whom shall be current members of the Church Council.
  - b. The Senior Pastor shall serve as the Chair of the Pastoral Call Team, unless it is the Senior Pastor position that is vacant. In this case, the Church Council President, or designee, shall serve as Chair.
  - c. The Church Council may also appoint additional Advisory Members to the Pastoral Call Team who shall be non-voting members.
  - d. The Pastoral Call Team may interview more than one pastoral candidate during the search process, but shall only recommend one candidate for Call to this congregation at a time.
  - e. The candidate recommended for Call by the Pastoral Call Team shall also be interviewed and affirmed by the Church Council prior to the candidate being recommended for Call to this congregation. The authority of the Church Council supersedes that of the Pastoral Call Team.
  - f. The candidate recommended for Call shall be introduced to the congregation in an informal setting of fellowship and conversation at an appropriate amount of time prior to the scheduling of a Special Meeting to vote on the recommendation to extend a Letter of Call.
  - g. The duties of the Pastoral Call Team shall cease upon the installation of the new ordained pastor.
21. The Church Council shall appoint a Reconciliation Team as necessary to assist in resolving conflict or the discipline of a member of the congregation. (Chapter 9) The Church Council may also secure outside counselors and resources as necessary to assist in such a process and maintain the unity of this congregation.
22. Church Council decisions are considered “continuing resolutions” until such time as they are over-ruled or changed by future Church Councils or official votes of this congregation.

## Chapter 9

### **Conflict Resolution and Discipline of Members**

1. This congregation places a high value on unity within the body of Christ. The concerns and needs of any individual member are therefore subject to the greater mission and ministry of the whole congregation.
2. Cause for discipline of a congregational member may include:
  - a. Denial of the Statement of Faith as described in this Constitution and Bylaws. (Chapter 2)
  - b. Conduct grossly unbecoming a member of the Church of Jesus Christ, including unrepentant immorality.
  - c. Actions that threaten the safety and security of this congregation and its members.
  - d. Persistent trouble-making in this congregation contributing to factions and disunity.
3. Prior to disciplinary action, reconciliation shall be attempted and encouraged following the successive steps described in Matthew 18:15-17:
  - a. Persons who have a grievance with any other person in this congregation shall go to them privately and try to resolve the conflict between them. (Matthew 18:15)
  - b. If the discipline of an individual member is required, the first step shall be private counsel and/or admonition by a pastor.
  - c. If the conflict cannot be resolved, or if a member persists in the conduct described above, a meeting will be established with the persons involved in the presence of two or three witnesses. This may include a pastor or a Reconciliation Team appointed by the Church Council. It may also include outside counselors and resources considered necessary or helpful in resolving the conflict. (Matthew 18:16)
  - d. If the conflict cannot be resolved, or if a member continues to persist in the conduct described above, the persons involved will be counseled and/or admonished in the presence of the Church Council. In this case, the member shall have received a written notice, specifying the exact charges that have been made against the member, at least ten days prior to the meeting. (Matthew 18:17)
4. If the conflict or behavior continues to persist, the Church Council shall then have at its option:
  - a. Censure before the Church Council or congregation;
  - b. Suspension from membership for a definite period of time; or
  - c. Exclusion from membership in this congregation. Disciplinary actions b. and c. shall be delivered to the member in writing.
5. Disciplinary actions may be reconsidered and revoked by the Church Council upon evidence that injustice has been done or on the basis of repentance of an individual or reconciliation of the parties involved.
6. If a particular grievance is made by a member of this congregation regarding a pastor or staff member, the Church Council or its designee, may at its discretion, serve in the capacity of counselor with the goal of bringing reconciliation in the name of Christ.

## Chapter 10

### **Amendments to this Constitution and Bylaws**

1. This congregation may adopt Bylaws which are deemed appropriate to further clarify the intent of this Constitution and fulfill the mission and ministry of this congregation. No Bylaws may conflict with this Constitution.
2. Bylaws may be adopted or amended at any Annual Meeting or Special Meeting of this congregation by a majority of Voting Members.
3. Recommendations for new Bylaws or amendments to existing Bylaws may be proposed by any Voting Member and shall be submitted in writing to the Church Council at least 60 days in advance of the meeting at which the vote will take place.
4. The Church Council retains the authority to amend and/or recommend or deny these submissions for a vote of this congregation. A recommendation to “deny” by the Church Council may be overridden by written request from ten percent (10%) of the Voting Members of this congregation.
5. This congregation must be notified of any proposed additions or amendments to the Bylaws in writing at least 30 days in advance of the meeting at which the vote will take place.
6. This Constitution may be amended at any Annual Meeting or Special Meeting of this congregation by a two-thirds majority of Voting Members.
7. Amendments to this Constitution may be proposed by any Voting Member and shall be submitted in writing to the Church Council at least 60 days in advance of the meeting at which the vote will take place.
8. The Church Council retains the authority to amend and/or recommend or deny these submissions for a vote of this congregation. A recommendation to “deny” by the Church Council may be overridden by written request from ten percent (10%) of the Voting Members of this congregation.
9. This congregation must be notified of any proposed amendments to this Constitution in writing at least 30 days in advance of the meeting at which the vote will take place.
10. The date of any additions or amendments to this Constitution and Bylaws shall be included next to such additions and amendments in the official copy of this Constitution and Bylaws.
11. Copies of this Constitution and Bylaws shall be available to any member of this congregation and to persons considering membership in this congregation.