

## Reading Guide for Proposed SMLC 2020 Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions

This document is the proposed new Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions (hereafter called the 'Constitution') to govern the ministry of St. Matthew Lutheran Church. St. Matthew's current Constitution, which also contained some bylaws, was last updated in 2005. It was based upon the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's (ELCA) Model Constitution for Congregations in effect at that time. This proposed new Constitution is based on the ELCA's 2019 Model Constitution for Congregations, a portion of St. Matthew's previous Constitution and bylaws, as well as new provisions written and approved by our Congregational Council. The proposed St. Matthew 2020 Constitution lays out the organization so that together as a church we may preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, share the sacraments, reach out to the neighbor with good news and share the love of God in the world.

A few pointers to guide your reading. Sections mandated by the ELCA are labeled with an asterisk (\*). Examples of these required sections include a confession of faith and purpose of the church, expectations of church members and ministers, as well as legal sections dealing with provisions in the unlikely event of misconduct or a congregation closing. Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions are specific to the local congregation's organization, operation, and life, and detail responsibilities and the structure of the congregation. Bylaws are written in **bold** type, and Continuing Resolutions are indicated by text in *italics*. It is these sections that are most relevant to the life of St. Matthew. In particular, our Church Council (called Congregational Council in this document) is proposing changes to improve and document our functioning. A few examples are: to make Council leadership more accessible to a broader segment of congregants, the Council proposes shortening council terms from three years to two years; to promote clarity regarding use of funds within the church, new sections have been added regarding the Operating Fund, the Memorial Fund, and Thrivent Choice Dollars. These are just a few examples of the updates.

I encourage you to reach out with any questions to Jack Pietrick, our Council President, or to myself, in the coming days. **Our meeting to approve this revised Constitution will be Sunday, December 8, 9:30am, immediately following the first service.** The meeting will be brief, and will be followed by food and fellowship in the Hall of the Evangelism. Please make every effort to be present.

Thanks is due to many people who worked on this Proposed Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions: to Bill Parchen, who undertook this huge and necessary initiative, drafted provisions and established a timeline for the process; to the Executive Committee of the Council who edited many drafts of this document; to all the Council members who diligently reviewed the proposed document and provided input for final edits; to Sandy Betsch who provided valuable editing.

And finally, thank you for your prayerful consideration of this Constitution and your continued support for the mission of St. Matthew Lutheran Church. Together in Christ we are digging deep, reaching out, and changing lives.

Blessings,



Pastor Julie

**Executive Committee of the Council:** Jack Pietrick, President; Missy Lindquist, Vice President; Dawne Ware and Debbie Steinberg, Treasurers; Pastors Brian and Julie

**Council Members:** Ann Eberhard, Fred Fenn, Clint Harriman, Prasad Panthagani, George Reider, Ben Wright