

CONSTITUTION  
of the  
CONGREGATION OF THE SERVANTS OF CHRIST

ARTICLE I. NAME AND REGISTERED OFFICE

- 1.1 The name of this foundation shall be the Congregation of the Servants of Christ, Inc.
- 1.2 The Congregation shall have and continuously maintain a registered office at Saint Augustine's House, 3316 Drahnner Road, Oxford, Michigan 48370-2506.

ARTICLE II. CONFESSIOIN OF FAITH

- 2.1 The Congregation is an ecumenical Christian community whose life of discipleship is inspired and shaped by the Holy Rule of St. Benedict. It identifies with the Lutheran tradition, understood as a movement within and for the one holy catholic and apostolic Church of Jesus Christ.
- 2.2 The Congregation accepts the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God. It accepts the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds as true declarations of its faith.
- 2.3 The Congregation adheres to the Evangelical Catholic Faith as set forth in the Unaltered Augsburg Confession and as explicated further by the other confessional writings in the Book of Concord of 1580.

ARTICLE III. PURPOSE

- 3.1 The purpose of the Congregation is to establish and maintain a Benedictine monastic community for men who subscribe to the Congregation's Confession of Faith.
- 3.2 The Congregation is committed to the growth of the permanent resident community, to the pursuit of ecumenical understanding, and to the provision of retreats for members of the Fellowship of St. Augustine and others. It seeks to serve the whole Church by its life of prayer and by the use of its facilities.

- 3.3 The life of the resident members of the Congregation shall have a monastic character that is informed by the Rule of Saint Benedict with due regard to monastic precedent, contemporary monastic interpretation and practice, and the unique history and conditions of the Congregation.

#### ARTICLE IV. MEMBERSHIP

- 4.1 The Congregation shall have two classes of members: professed members and associate members.
- 4.2 Professed members are those men who are actively living the monastic vocation of the Congregation. They shall have completed the required period of discernment and monastic formation, and have made a public profession of their commitment to the Congregation.
- 4.3 Associate Members are Christian men or women, married or unmarried who support the purpose of the Congregation. They shall (a) have completed the required period of discernment, (b) be active in the Sacramental life of the Church and pray regularly for the Congregation, (c) keep in regular contact with the professed members through personal visits or correspondence, (d) worship with the professed members at least occasionally through the year or by making an annual retreat, and (e) share in the support of the Congregation by regular gifts according to the means of each. They shall renew their membership annually at Easter.

#### ARTICLE V. CHAPTER

- 5.1 The Chapter of the Congregation is a legally called meeting of professed members and associate members. It is the highest legislative authority of the Congregation.
- 5.2 An annual meeting of the Chapter shall be held during the Easter Season of each year.
- 5.3 Special meetings of the Chapter may be held whenever called by the Prior, or any two members of the Council.
- 5.4 Notice of regular or special meetings of the Chapter shall be given to each member in writing, at least 10 days before the time fixed for the meeting, and such notice shall advise each member as to the time, place, and general purpose of the meeting.
- 5.5 A quorum for the transaction of business at any Chapter shall consist of 10% of the members, of which at least two must be members of the Council.
- 5.6 Each member of the Chapter shall be entitled to one vote.

- 5.7 It is reserved to the Chapter to vote on the following matters: (a) the election of the Prior, (b) election of the members of the Council, (c) amendments to the Constitution, (d) the sale or purchase of real estate, and (e) incurrence of burdensome debt.

#### ARTICLE VI. ADMISSION TO MEMBERSHIP

- 6.1 Candidates are admitted to professed membership after a period of discernment and formation that includes a period of postulancy of not less than three months followed by a novitiate of not less than one year.
- 6.2 A candidate for the novitiate shall (a) be baptized and subscribe to the Congregation's confession of faith (Article II) , (b) provide two references from persons who know him well, one of which shall be a pastor, (c) disclose any debts or other financial liabilities, (d) be free of marital or contractual obligation, (e) furnish a medical certificate showing satisfactory health, (f) consent to a legal background check, (g) be at least 21 years of age, and (h) have the approval of the Council.
- 6.3 A novice becomes a professed member upon (a) nomination by the Prior, (b) affirmative vote by a majority of the professed members, (c) disposition of his personal property, (d) the making of a public profession of his commitment to the Congregation for a period of not less than one year. This profession may be annually renewed with the permission of the community.
- 6.4 A professed monk may make a life profession after at least three years of simple profession and attainment of at least thirty years of age.
- 6.5 Candidates are admitted as Associate Members after nomination by the Prior, a period of discernment of not less than one year, and affirmative vote by a majority of the Chapter.

#### ARTICLE VII. TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

- 7.1 The professed members by majority vote may remove a professed member for cause after an appropriate hearing. An appeal to the Visitor may be made.
- 7.2 The Chapter may, by majority vote, remove an associate member for cause after an appropriate hearing.
- 7.3 Any member may resign by submitting a written resignation to the Prior.

- 7.4 Any associate member who fails to renew membership before the annual meeting during the Easter Season shall be deemed to have terminated membership. Reinstatement may be gained by majority vote of the Chapter.

#### ARTICLE VIII. PRIOR

- 8.1 The Prior of the Congregation shall be a professed or associate member who is in residence, elected by the Chapter for a term of six years.
- 8.2 The Prior shall be the president and principal executive officer of the Congregation and shall in general supervise all of the business and affairs of the Congregation. He shall preside at all meetings of the Chapter. He may sign any deeds, mortgages, bonds, contracts, or other instruments which the Chapter has authorized to be executed; and in general he shall perform all duties incident to the office of president. He shall be bonded.
- 8.3 The Prior shall in general have the character, duties, rights, and functions of the superior or prior of a monastic community.

#### ARTICLE IX. COUNCIL

- 9.1 The Council is composed of the Prior and a minimum of three and a maximum of six professed or associate members who shall be annually recommended by the Prior and elected by the Chapter. They shall be bonded.
- 9.2 The Council is the Board of Directors for the Congregation. A quorum for a meeting of the council is a majority of the members of the Council.
- 9.3 The Prior needs the consent of a majority of the Council (a) to admit a candidate to the novitiate, (b) to make extraordinary expenditures, (c) to establish general policies that further define or implement the purposes of this Constitution.
- 9.4 The Prior can gain the consent of the Council by asking for it individually without having to call the Council together.
- 9.5 The Council may elect officers as may be expedient.

#### ARTICLE X. VISITOR

- 10.1 The Visitor of the Congregation shall be a Bishop or Pastor who is recommended by the Prior and confirmed by the Chapter.

- 10.2 In collaboration with the Council the Visitor provides pastoral care by guarding the Christian life and doctrine of the Congregation and the spiritual well-being of each professed member.
- 10.3 The Visitor may receive appeals from any member of the Congregation without hindrance. He shall, however, make no final decisions in such appeals without consultation with the Prior and/or the Council.

#### ARTICLE XI. PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

- 11.1 The parliamentary authority in the Congregation is Robert's Rules of Order, latest edition.

#### ARTICLE XII. BYLAWS

- 12.1 The Council may adopt or amend bylaws and procedural documents as needed. These may not conflict with this constitution.
- 12.2 Bylaws may be adopted or amended at any properly called meeting of the Council with a quorum present by a majority vote of those members present and voting.

#### ARTICLE XIII. AMENDMENTS

- 13.1 This Constitution may be altered or amended by a two-thirds vote of the Chapter.

#### ARTICLE XIV. DISSOLUTION

- 14.1 In the event of dissolution, all assets of the Congregation, real and personal, shall be transferred to a non-profit organization, whose ministry and mission are consistent with that of the Congregation, determined by the remaining members of the Congregation at the time of dissolution.