

EXHIBIT 7

REVISED

**NORTHERN ILLINOIS SYNOD**  
**EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA**

**CONSTITUTION,  
BYLAWS, AND  
CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS**

as adopted by the Constituting Convention of the  
Northern Illinois Synod of the Evangelical  
Lutheran Church in America  
(June 19, 1987)

and as amended by the

First (1988), Second (1989), Third (1990), Fourth (1991), Fifth (1992), Sixth (1993),  
Seventh (1994), Eighth (1995), Ninth (1996), Eleventh (1998), Twelfth (1999), Thirteenth  
(2000), Fourteenth (2001), Fifteenth (2002), Seventeenth (2004), Nineteenth (2006), Twentieth  
(2007), Twenty-first (2008), Twenty-second (2009), Twenty-third (2010), Twenty-fifth (2012),  
Thirtieth (2017) Synod Assemblies.



## INTRODUCTION to the *Constitution for Synods*

The *Constitution for Synods*, like the other governing documents of this church, reflects the theology and polity of this church as it organizes itself to 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. Each expression of this church — churchwide, synod and congregation — is held together in a relationship of interdependence that encourages each to respond to its context. These documents also demonstrate our commitment to seeing ourselves with others as part of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. As such, the *Constitution for Synods* is deeply rooted in Scripture, the Lutheran Confessions, and the history of this church and its predecessors.

The *Constitution for Synods* was adopted by the Constituting Convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, as required by the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*. This current edition of the *Constitution for Synods* contains changes adopted by all churchwide assemblies, including the fifteenth Churchwide Assembly in 2019. It is consistent with the requirements of the governing documents of the ELCA's churchwide organization, and it provides organizational flexibility to recognize local context.

► **Required provisions:** Sections of the *Constitution for Synods* marked by a dagger [†] are required provisions. These sections, including constitutional provisions and bylaws, must be used without alteration or amendment of the text in any manner (i.e., neither additions nor deletions are permissible). In accordance with provision †S18.11, amendments to required provisions in the *Constitution for Synods* passed by the Churchwide Assembly are automatically incorporated into the constitutions of individual synods upon formal certification by the secretary of this church. Because the secretary has provided such certification following the 2019 Churchwide Assembly, required provisions marked by a dagger [†] have been incorporated into synod constitutions.

► **Codification explanation:** The *Constitution for Synods*, like the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* and the *Model Constitution for Congregations*, is organized into chapters by general subject matter and codified as (a) constitutional provisions, (b) bylaws, and (c) continuing resolutions. Each provision is preceded by a capital "S." If a provision is mandatory, it will be preceded by a dagger, "†S."

- a. Constitutional provisions are codified with two sets of numbers, preceded by an "S": the chapter number, followed by a period and a two-digit number. A period follows the two-digit number. Thus, one required constitutional provision related to "Conferences, Clusters, Coalitions, Area Subdivisions, and Networks" in Chapter 12 is codified as "†S12.01." In accordance with Chapter 18, titled "Amendments, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions," there are three types of constitutional provisions in each synod's constitution:
  1. Required constitutional provisions adopted by the Churchwide Assembly are designated by a dagger "†", as discussed above (†S18.11.);
  2. Recommended constitutional provisions adopted by the Churchwide Assembly may be adopted by majority vote at one meeting of the Synod Assembly (†S18.12.);
  3. Other constitutional provisions, including different versions of the recommended provisions referred to in the previous paragraph, may be initiated in and adopted by individual synods, but such provisions may not conflict with the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*. Such synod constitutional amendments are adopted and become effective in accordance with †S18.13.
- b. Bylaws follow constitutional provisions to which they apply. They are not intended to be organized in a separate document at the end of the constitutional provisions. Bylaws are codified with three sets of numbers: the chapter number (preceded by an "S"), the related constitutional provision number, and a two-digit number. There are periods after the chapter number, after the reference to the constitutional provision, and after the bylaw number. Thus, a bylaw relating to synod networks would be codified as "S12.01.01." Although the *Constitution for Synods* contains some required bylaws, there is not a model set of bylaws or continuing resolutions because bylaws and continuing resolutions normally relate to specific practices and details of each synod's organization, operation, and life. Thus, each synod has discretion and may develop its own bylaws and continuing resolutions, including bylaws and continuing resolutions under required constitutional provisions, but no such bylaw or continuing resolution may conflict with constitutional provisions in the *Constitution for Synods*, mandatory synod bylaws, or with the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*. Bylaws are adopted and amended in accordance with Chapter 18. Newly adopted bylaws or amendments to bylaws shall be reported to the secretary of this church.

- c. Continuing resolutions are intended to provide descriptions of operational patterns and practices or of the ongoing responsibilities of committees or other units within the organizational structure of the synod. They follow the relevant constitutional provision or bylaw to which they refer. Continuing resolutions also are codified with three sets of numbers, except that the third set is preceded by a capital letter. Thus, a continuing resolution describing the contents of a Synod Council report to the Synod Assembly in Chapter 10 might be numbered “S10.03.A19.” The initial numbers “S10.03” indicate that the continuing resolution relates to the designated constitutional provision, which in this case states that the functions of the Synod Council include providing a report to the regular meeting of the Synod Assembly. The final letter and numbers “A19” designate that this is the first continuing resolution “A” and the year that it was adopted, in this example 2019. Continuing resolutions are adopted and amended in accordance with Chapter 18. Unlike constitutional provisions and bylaws, continuing resolutions may be adopted either at a legally called and conducted meeting of the Synod Assembly (by a majority vote) or by the Synod Council (by a two-thirds vote). New continuing resolutions or amendments to existing continuing resolutions shall be reported to the secretary of this church.

► **Missing numbers:** You will notice that certain numbers are missing from the numbering sequence in some chapters. These omissions are intentional. For example, in some chapters the number “.10.” and multiples thereof have been reserved for possible use as section headings in future editions.

► **Selection of options:** Alternatives are provided in some places within the *Constitution for Synods*. Alternatives are noted by brackets or blank lines. For example, constitutional provision †S8.51. allows synods to choose the length of terms for the vice president, secretary, and treasurer. The appropriate number of years should be filled in by each synod. In addition, †S8.51.c. provides that the treasurer may be elected by the Synod Assembly or appointed by the Synod Council. Each synod should select one of those options.

► **References to church:** In the governing documents, “Church” with a capital letter refers to the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. The words “church” or “this church” in lower case letters refer to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

► **Consultation and concluding comments:** In order to assist synods, the Office of the Secretary is available for consultation, both about potential amendments to the *Constitution for Synods* and about the review process for congregational constitutions. The important task of amending a constitution is challenging. It is, however, an essential endeavor that merits thoughtful work. In addressing the synod’s constitutional responsibilities, may God grant you and your colleagues wisdom, discernment, and commitment to the unity of this church in faithful witness to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Secretary Wm Chris Boerger  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
August 10, 2019

## CONSTITUTION FOR THE NORTHERN ILLINOIS SYNOD OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

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### Chapter 1.

#### NAME AND INCORPORATION

- †S1.01. The name of this synod, as determined by the Churchwide Assembly, shall be The Northern Illinois Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- †S1.02. For the purposes of this constitution and the accompanying bylaws, the Northern Illinois Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is hereafter designated as “this synod” or “the synod.”
- †S1.11. This synod shall be incorporated. Amendments to the articles of incorporation of this synod shall be submitted to the Church Council for ratification before filing.
- †S1.21. The seal of this synod is identical to the seal of the ELCA with the exception that the name of this synod and the year of its constituting convention form the outer edge of the seal.
- S1.21.01. The office of the bishop shall have custody of the seal.

### Chapter 2.

#### STATUS

- †S2.01. This synod possesses the powers conferred upon it, and accepts the duties and responsibilities assigned to it, in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, which are recognized as having governing force in the life of this synod.
- †S2.02. The name Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA or “this church”) as used herein refers in general references to this whole church, including its three expressions: congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization. The name Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is also the name of the corporation of the churchwide organization to which specific references may be made herein.
- †S2.03. No provision of this constitution shall be inconsistent with the constitution and bylaws of this church.

### Chapter 3.

#### TERRITORY

- †S3.01. The territory of this synod, as determined by the Churchwide Assembly, shall be: The counties of Boone, Bureau, Carroll, DeKalb, Grundy, Henderson, Henry, Jo Daviess, Kendall, Knox, LaSalle, Lee, McHenry, Mercer, Ogle, Putnam, Rock Island, Stephenson, Warren, Whiteside, Will, Winnebago in the state of Illinois.
- †S3.02. “Determined by the Churchwide Assembly,” as stipulated by †S3.01., is understood to include the reported changes in synod relationship made by any congregation in a border area agreed under ELCA bylaws 10.01.01. and 10.01.03.

### Chapter 4.

#### CONFESSION OF FAITH

- †S4.01. This synod confesses the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- †S4.02. This synod confesses Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and the Gospel as the power of God for the salvation of all who believe.
- Jesus Christ is the Word of God incarnate, through whom everything was made and through whose life, death, and resurrection God fashions a new creation.
  - The proclamation of God’s message to us as both Law and Gospel is the Word of God, revealing judgment and mercy through word and deed, beginning with the Word in creation, continuing in the history of Israel, and centering in all its fullness in the person and work of Jesus Christ.
  - 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.
- †S4.03. This synod 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.

Revised Draft January 2020; May 2020, December 2020

As amended to comply with Model Constitution for Synods: August 2019,

As amended by Synod Council Action: September 2019, January 2021

- †S4.04. This synod accepts the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds as true declarations of the faith of this synod.
- †S4.05. This synod 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.
- †S4.06. This synod 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, and the Formula of Concord, as further valid interpretations of the faith of the Church.
- †S4.07. This synod confesses the Gospel, recorded in the Holy Scripture and confessed in the ecumenical creeds and Lutheran confessional writings, as the power of God to create and sustain the Church for God's mission in the world.

**Chapter 5.**  
**NATURE OF THE CHURCH**

- †S5.01. All power in the Church belongs to our Lord Jesus Christ, its head. All actions of this synod are to be carried out under his rule and authority.
- †S5.02. This church confesses the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church and is resolved to serve Christian unity throughout the world.
- †S5.03. 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 our day.
- †S5.04. This church, inspired and led by the Holy Spirit, participates in The Lutheran World Federation as a global communion of churches, engaging in faithful witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ and in service for the sake of God's mission in the world.

**Chapter 6.**  
**STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

- †S6.01. 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.
- †S6.02. To participate in God's mission, this synod as a part of the Church shall:
  - a. 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.
  - b. Carry out Christ's Great Commission by reaching out to all people to bring them to faith in Christ and by doing all ministry with a global awareness consistent with the understanding of God as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier of all.
  - c. 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 the nations, and standing with the poor and powerless and committing itself to their needs.
  - d. Worship God in proclamation of the Word and administration of the sacraments and through lives of prayer, praise, thanksgiving, witness, and service.
  - 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.
- †S6.03. This synod, in cooperation with the churchwide organization, shall bear primary responsibility for the oversight of the life and mission of this church in its territory. In fulfillment of this role and consistent with policies and procedures of this church, the synod shall:
  - a. Provide for pastoral care of congregations and rostered ministers in the synod;
  - b. Plan for, facilitate, and nurture the mission of this church through congregations;
  - c. Strengthen interdependent relationships among congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization, and foster relationships with agencies and institutions affiliated with or related to this church as well as ecumenical partners.

- d. Interpret the work of this church to congregations and to the public on the territory of the synod.
- †S6.03.01. The responsibilities of the synod include the following:
  - a. providing for pastoral care of congregations, ministers of Word and Sacrament, and ministers of Word and Service in the synod, including:
    - 1) approving candidates for the ministry of Word and Sacrament in cooperation with the appropriate seminaries of this church, which may be done through multi-synod committees;
    - 2) authorizing ordinations and ordaining ministers of Word and Sacrament on behalf of this church;
    - 3) approving ministers of Word and Service, which may be done through multi-synod committees;
    - 4) authorizing ordinations and ordaining ministers of Word and Service on behalf of this church; and
    - 5) consulting in the call process for rostered ministers.
  - b. providing for leadership recruitment, preparation, and support in accordance with churchwide standards and policies, including:
    - 1) nurturing and supporting congregations and lay leaders;
    - 2) seeking and recruiting qualified candidates for the rostered ministries of this church;
    - 3) making provision for pastoral care, call review, and guidance;
    - 4) encouraging and supporting persons on the rosters of this church in stewardship of their abilities, care of self, and pursuit of continuing education to undergird their effectiveness of service; and
    - 5) supporting recruitment of leaders for this church's colleges, universities, seminaries, and social ministry organizations.
  - c. providing for discipline of congregations, ministers of Word and Sacrament, and ministers of Word and Service; as well as for termination of call, appointment, adjudication, and appeals consistent with Chapter 20 of this church's constitution.
  - d. providing for archives in conjunction with other synods.
- †S6.03.02. In planning for, facilitating, and nurturing the mission of this church through congregations, the responsibilities of the synod include the following:
  - a. developing of new ministries, redevelopment of existing ministries, and support and assistance in the conclusion, if necessary, of a particular ministry;
  - b. leading and encouraging of congregations in their evangelism efforts;
  - c. assisting members of its congregations in carrying out their ministries in the world;
  - d. encouraging congregations to respond to human need, work for justice and peace, care for the sick and the suffering, and participate responsibly in society;
  - e. providing resources for congregational life;
  - f. grouping congregations in conferences, clusters, coalitions, or other area subdivisions for mission purposes.
- †S6.03.03. In strengthening interdependent relationships among congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization, and in fostering relationships with agencies and institutions affiliated with or related to this church as well as with ecumenical partners, the responsibilities of the synod include the following:
  - a. promoting interdependent relationships among congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization, and entering into relationships with other synods in the region;
  - b. fostering organizations for youth, women, and men, and organizations for language or ethnic communities;
  - c. developing relationships with social ministry organizations and ministries, participating in their mission planning, and providing supportive funding;
  - d. supporting relationships with and providing supportive funding on behalf of colleges, universities, and campus ministries;
  - e. maintaining relationships with and providing supportive funding on behalf of seminaries and continuing education centers;
  - f. fostering supporting relationships with camps and other outdoor ministries;
  - g. fostering supporting relationships with preschools, elementary schools, and secondary schools operated by congregations of the synod;
  - h. fostering relationships with ecumenical and global companions;
  - i. cooperating with other synods and the churchwide organization in creating, using, and supporting regions to carry out those functions of the synod which can best be done cooperatively with other synods and the churchwide organization.

- †S6.03.04. In interpreting the work of this church on the territory of the synod, the responsibilities of the synod include the following:
- a. encouraging financial support for the work of this church by individuals and congregations;
  - b. participating in churchwide programs;
  - c. interpreting social statements in a manner consistent with the interpretation given by the churchwide unit or office which assisted in the development of the statement, and suggestion of social study issues;
  - d. providing ecumenical guidance and encouragement.
- †S6.04. Except as otherwise provided in this constitution and bylaws, the Synod Council shall establish processes that will ensure that at least 60 percent of the members of the synod assemblies, councils, committees, boards, and other organizational units shall be laypersons; and that at least 45 percent of the lay members of assemblies, councils, committees, boards, or other organizational units shall be women and at least 45 percent shall be men; and that, where possible, the representation of ministers of Word and Sacrament shall include both men and women. This synod shall establish processes that will enable it to reach a minimum goal that 10 percent of its assemblies, councils, committees, boards, or other organizational units be persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English.
- †S6.04.01. It is the goal of this synod that 10 percent of the membership of synod assemblies, councils, committees, boards and/or other organizational units be persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English.
- †S6.04.02. It is the goal of this synod that at least 10 percent of the voting members of the Synod Assembly, Synod Council, committees, and organizational units of this synod be youth and young adults. The Synod Council shall establish a plan for implementing this goal. For purposes of the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of this synod, the term “youth” means a voting member of a congregation who has not reached the age of 18 at the time of election or appointment for service. The term “young adult” means a voting member of a congregation between the ages of 18 and 30 at the time of election or appointment for service.
- S6.04.A87. Procedures for designating members of committees and other organizational units of this synod shall give strong consideration to selecting persons with the necessary knowledge and competence to be effective members of the synod assemblies, councils, committees, boards and/or other organizational units in accordance with section S11.142. of this constitution.
- †S6.05. Each assembly, council, committee, board, commission, task force, or other body of this synod or any synod units shall be conclusively presumed to have been properly constituted, and neither the method of selection nor the composition of any such assembly, council, committee, board, commission, task force, or other body may be challenged in a court of law by any person or be used as the basis of a challenge in a court of law to the validity or effect of any action taken or authorized by any such assembly, council, committee, board, commission, task force, or other body.
- †S6.06. References herein to the nature of the relationship between the three expressions of this church—congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization—as being interdependent or as being in a partnership relationship describe the mutual responsibility of these expressions in God’s mission and the fulfillment of the purposes of this church as described in this chapter, and do not imply or describe the creation of partnerships, co-ventures, agencies, or other legal relationships recognized in civil law.

## Chapter 7.

### SYNOD ASSEMBLY

- †S7.01. This synod shall have a Synod Assembly, which shall be its highest legislative authority. The powers of the Synod Assembly are limited only by the provisions in the Articles of Incorporation, this constitution and bylaws, the assembly’s own resolutions, and the constitutions and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- †S7.11. A regular meeting of the Synod Assembly shall be held at least triennially.
- S7.11.01. The time and place of the Northern Illinois Synod Assembly shall be determined by the Synod Council. The time and place for the next regular assembly normally shall be announced three (3) months prior to the assembly.
- S7.11.A87. It is the goal of this synod to have a regular meeting of the Synod Assembly annually to foster cooperation and communication within the Synod and to provide direction for Synod officers, councils, committees, boards, or other organizations.
- S7.12. Special meetings of the Synod Assembly may be called by the bishop with the consent of the Synod Council and shall be called by the bishop at the request of one-fifth of the voting members of the Synod Assembly.
- a. The notice of each special meeting shall define the purpose for which it is to be held. The scope of actions to be taken at such a special meeting shall be limited to the subject matter(s) described in the notice.

Commented [PE1]: Added for clarity



- b. If the special meeting of the Synod Assembly is required for the purpose of electing a successor bishop because of death, resignation, or inability to serve, the special meeting shall be called by the Synod Council after consultation with the presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- S7.13.** Notice of the time and place of all meetings of the Synod Assembly shall be given by the secretary of this synod.
- S7.14.** One-half of the members of the Synod Assembly shall constitute a quorum.
- †S7.21.** The membership of the Synod Assembly, of which at least 60 percent of the voting membership shall be composed of laypersons, shall be constituted as follows:
- All ministers of Word and Sacrament under call on the roster of this synod in attendance at the Synod Assembly shall be voting members.
  - All ministers of Word and Service, under call, on the roster of this synod shall be voting members in the Synod Assembly.
  - A minimum of one lay member elected by each congregation with fewer than 175 baptized members and a minimum of two lay members elected by each congregation with 175 or more baptized members related to this synod, typically one of whom shall be a man and one of whom shall be a woman, shall be voting members. The Synod Council shall establish a formula to provide additional lay representation from congregations on the basis of the number of baptized members in the congregation. The Synod Council shall seek to ensure that at least 45 percent of the lay members of the assembly shall be women and at least 45 percent shall be men.
  - Voting membership shall include the officers of this synod.
- †S7.21.01.** Voting members shall begin serving with the opening of a regular Synod Assembly and shall continue serving until voting members are seated at the next regular Synod Assembly.
- †S7.21.02.** If a special Synod Assembly is called and voting members at the previous assembly are unable to serve as voting members, where permitted by state law, the congregation through the Congregation Council may elect new members who shall continue to serve until the next Synod Assembly.
- S7.21.03.** Every congregation shall send in the credentials of its voting members to the synod office at least 60 days prior to the opening of the regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.
- S7.21.04.** The voting members are required to announce their presence upon their arrival at the Synod Assembly through the medium of registration.
- S7.21.05.** Compliance with the constitution lay voting member percentage requirements for Synod Assemblies shall be established for all purposes at an Assembly by certification of the Credentials Committee that at least sixty percent (60%) of registered voting members to the Assembly are laypersons.
- S7.21.06.** Should there be insufficient lay voting members to comprise sixty percent (60%) of the registered voting members, the Bishop may appoint as lay voting members from among members of Northern Illinois Synod congregations who are registered visitors to the Synod Assembly or registered members of the Synod Youth Assembly sufficient numbers of persons to bring the ratio of clergy and lay voting members within the constitutionally prescribed ratio.
- S7.21.A87.** It is the intention of this synod that normally there shall be no more than one voting member of the Synod Assembly from a single household.
- S7.21.A11.** In order to implement continuing resolution +6.04.B09, Each congregation may elect 1 additional youth (a voting member who has not reached the age of 18 at the time of election or appointment for service) or 1 young adult (a voting member between the ages of 18 and 30 at the time of election or appointment for service).
- S7.22.** This synod may establish processes that permit retired rostered ministers, or those ~~designated as disabled~~ granted disability status, or on leave from call, on the roster of the synod to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, consistent with †S7.21.c. If the synod does not establish processes to permit the rostered ministers specified above to serve as voting members, they shall have voice but not vote in the meetings of the Synod Assembly.
- S7.22.01.** Retired ~~pastors~~ rostered ministers on the roster of the Synod shall be voting members of the Assembly if they have pre-registered by the date and in the manner provided by the Synod Council. Such guidelines shall provide for pre-registration sufficiently in advance of the next Assembly so as to allow the Synod to comply with provisions of Section +S7.21. of the Synod Constitution regarding the percentage relationship of clergy to lay membership at the Assembly. Retired rostered ministers on the roster of this Synod serving under contract to a congregation, shall be a voting member in meetings of the Synod Assembly.
- †S7.23.** The presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and such other official representatives of the churchwide organization as may be designated by the presiding bishop, shall have voice but not vote in the meetings of the Synod Assembly. Like privileges shall be accorded to those additional persons whom the Synod Assembly or the Synod Council shall from time to time designate.

Revised Draft January 2020; May 2020, December 2020  
 As amended to comply with Model Constitution for Synods: August 2019,  
 As amended by Synod Council Action: September 2019, January 2021

**Commented [PE2]:** Amended for clarity and removal of unnecessary language

**Commented [PE3]:** Recommended Amendment by ELCA synod model constitution

**Commented [PE4]:** Amended to utilize language of the ELCA synod model constitution

**Commented [PE5]:** Added to come into compliance with current practice

- S7.24.** Ministers under call on the rosters of this synod shall remain as members of the Synod Assembly so long as they remain under call and so long as their names appear on the rosters of this synod. Lay members of the Synod Assembly representing congregations shall continue as such until replaced by the election of new members or until they have been disqualified by termination of membership. Normally, congregations will hold elections prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.
- †**S7.25.** Except as otherwise provided in this constitution or in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, each voting member of the Synod Assembly shall be a voting member of a congregation of this synod.
- S7.26.** This synod may establish processes through the Synod Council that permit representatives of authorized worshiping communities of the synod, which have been authorized under ELCA bylaw 10.02.03 **10.01.04.**, to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, consistent with †S7.21.
- S7.26.A13.** All synodically authorized worshiping communities and congregations under development on the territory of this synod shall be voting members in the same numbers and gender ratio as congregation of this synod as provided for in †S7.21.c.
- S7.27.** This synod may establish processes through the Synod Council to grant a minister of Word and Sacrament from a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by the Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America the privilege of both voice and vote in the Synod Assembly during the period of that minister's service in a congregation of this church.
- S7.28.** Duly elected voting members of the Synod Council who are not otherwise voting members of the Synod Assembly under †S7.52.41-†S7.21 shall be granted the privilege of both voice and vote as members of the Synod Assembly.
- S7.28.A00.** The Synod Lutheran Youth Organization (commonly known as "Light") president, or designee, shall be a voting member of the Synod Assembly.
- †**S7.31.** Proxy and absentee voting shall not be permitted in the transaction of any business of the Synod Assembly.
- S7.32.** *Robert's Rules of Order*, latest edition, shall govern parliamentary procedure of the Synod Assembly, unless otherwise ordered by the assembly.
- S7.33.** "Ex officio" as used herein means membership with full rights of voice and vote unless otherwise expressly limited.
- S7.34.** There shall be established such committees, whose members shall be appointed annually by the Synod Council, as the Synod Assembly may from time to time determine to assist in the work of the Synod Assembly.
- S7.34.01.** **Credentials Committee.** A committee on credentials shall be appointed by the Synod Council, which shall will normally consist of an ordained minister serving a congregation in the city in which the Synod Assembly convenes and two (2) other persons. The duties of this committee shall be to approve the applications and credentials of Synod Assembly voting members and to report to the presiding officer.
- S7.34.02.** **Election Committee.** An Election Committee shall be appointed by the Synod Council, which shall consist of no fewer than three (3) members to conduct the elections and report the results to the Synod Assembly.
- S7.34.03.** **Resolutions Committee.** A Resolutions Committee shall be appointed by the Synod Council and shall consist of five (5) members, of whom one may be appointed the parliamentarian of the Synod Assembly. Duties of the Resolutions committee shall be as follows:
- Process all resolutions addressed to the Synod Assembly and report thereon with its recommendations.
  - Recommend special orders for the hearing of representatives.
  - Grant or deny permission to distribute printed matter or to set up displays not issuing from nor approved by the Office of the Secretary.
  - Provide such assistance to the bishop as requested during the course of the Synod Assembly.
- S7.34.04.** **Courtesy Committee.** A Courtesy Committee of no fewer than three (3) members shall be appointed by the Synod Council to provide for the extending of special recognition to persons or organizations particularly deserving of recognition by the Assembly.
- S7.34.05.** **Minutes Review Committee.** A Minutes Review Committee of no fewer than three (3) members shall be appointed by the Synod Council to assist the Synod secretary with review of minutes of the Synod Assembly prior to reporting on same to the Synod Council and Assembly by the secretary.
- S7.40.** **Synod Assembly Agenda**
- S7.40.01.** Holy Communion shall normally be administered at each regular Synod Assembly.
- S7.40.02.** All persons appointed to positions of leadership for general religious services or public meetings at the Synod Assembly shall be subject to approval by the bishop.
- S7.40.03.** The secretary shall send out a bulletin of reports to all ministers of Word and Sacrament, ministers of Word and Service and lay voting members at least thirty (30) days prior to the Synod Assembly. This bulletin shall normally include the Synod Assembly programs, presenters, proposed motions and resolutions and the proposed agenda.

**Commented [PE6]:** Amended to correct codification

**Commented [PE7]:** Amended to conform to ELCA synod model constitution

**Commented [PE8]:** Amended for clarity

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**Commented [PE12]:** To allow for flexibility

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**Commented [PE18]:** Amended to current practice

**Commented [PE19]:** Amended to current practice

**Commented [PE20]:** Amended to current practice

**Commented [PE21]:** Amended to current practice

**Commented [PE22]:** Amended to allow for unusual circumstances

**Commented [PE23]:** Amended to create some flexibility

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**S7.40.04.** The synod council shall approve the proposed agenda for each Synod Assembly.

**S7.40.A18. Displays, Space, Distribution of Materials, and Performances**

- a. Only materials authorized by the ~~Resolutions Committee~~, bishop, and/or the assembly co-chairpersons will be distributed to voting members of the Assembly during the Assembly.
- b. Display space exists primarily for church related organizations approved by the ~~Resolutions Committee~~, bishop, and/or the assembly co-chairpersons.
- c. Inclusion of Synod Assembly packet material from related institutions, agencies, and organizations must be approved by the ~~Resolutions Committee~~, bishop, and/or the assembly co-chairpersons.
- d. Display space may be provided to organizations that have no official relationship to this church, but which offer programs or services which the bishop and/or assembly co-chairpersons deem helpful or useful to congregations and/or leaders of the Synod. No meeting facilities are provided to organizations that have no official relationship to this church.
- e. No commercial displays or sales booths are permitted without the approval of the bishop and/or the assembly co-chairpersons. If approved, these displays are to be clearly marked as outside displays. The bishop and/or Assembly Co-Coordinator may set a fee for such commercial displays.
- f. Space for meetings or meal functions must be approved by the bishop and/or the assembly co-chairpersons.
- g. Individuals and/or groups wishing to appear in relation to or at the Assembly must secure permission from the bishop and/or assembly co-chairpersons of the Assembly.

**Commented [PE25]:** Amended to current practice

**Commented [PE26]:** Amended to current practice

**S7.50. Additional Powers of the Synod Assembly.**

**Commented [PE27]:** NO longer needed

**Chapter 8.**

**OFFICERS**

†**S8.01.** The officers of this synod shall be a bishop, a vice president, a secretary, and a treasurer.

**S8.10. Bishop**

†**S8.11.** The bishop shall be elected by the Synod Assembly. The bishop shall be a minister of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

**S8.11.01.** When authorized by the Synod Council in order to address special circumstances, the synod bishop may be compensated as an employee or contractor for specified services to another expression of this church. Such an arrangement may be terminated by the Synod Assembly or Synod Council if determined to be detrimental to the function of the office or if the special circumstances no longer apply.

**Commented [PE28]:** Recommended amendment ELCA synod model constitution

†**S8.12.** As this synod's pastor, the bishop shall:

- a. Preach, teach, and administer the sacraments in accord with the Confession of Faith of this church.
- b. Have primary responsibility for the ministry of Word and Sacrament in this synod and its congregations, providing pastoral care and leadership for this synod, its congregations, its ministers of Word and Sacrament, and its ministers of Word and Service.
- c. Exercise solely this church's power to ordain (or provide for the ordination by another synod bishop of) approved candidates who have received and accepted a properly issued, duly attested letter of call for the office of ministry of Word and Sacrament (and as provided in the bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America).
- d. Ordain (or provide for the ordination of) approved candidates who have received and accepted a properly issued, duly attested letter of call for service as ministers of Word and Service of this church.
- e. Attest letters of call for persons called to serve congregations in the synod, letters of call for persons called by the Synod Council, and letters of call for persons on the rosters of this synod called by the Church Council.
- f. Install (or provide for the installation of) rostered ministers whose calls the bishop has attested.
- g. Exercise leadership in the mission of this church and in so doing:
  - 1) Interpret and advocate the mission and theology of the whole church;
  - 2) Lead in fostering support for and commitment to the mission of this church within this synod;
  - 3) Coordinate the use of the resources available to this synod as it seeks to promote the health of this church's life and witness in the areas served by this synod;
  - 4) Submit a report to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly concerning the synod's life and work; and
  - 5) Advise and counsel this synod's related institutions and organizations.

- h. Practice leadership in strengthening the unity of the Church and in so doing:
  - 1) Exercise oversight of the preaching, teaching, and administration of the sacraments within this synod in accord with the Confession of Faith of this church;
  - 2) Be responsible for administering the constitutionally established processes for the resolution of controversies and for the discipline of rostered ministers and congregations of this synod;
  - 3) Be the chief ecumenical officer of this synod;
  - 4) Be a member of the Conference of Bishops and consult regularly with other synod bishops;
  - 5) Foster awareness of other churches throughout the Lutheran world communion and, where appropriate, engage in contact with leaders of those churches;
  - 6) Cultivate communion in faith and mission with appropriate Christian judicatory leaders functioning within the territory of this synod; and
  - 7) Be *ex officio* a member of the Churchwide Assembly.
- i. Oversee and administer the work of this synod and in so doing:
  - 1) Serve as the president of the synod corporation and be the chief executive and administrative officer of this synod, who is authorized and empowered, in the name of this synod, to sign deeds or other instruments and to affix the seal of this synod;
  - 2) Preside at all meetings of the Synod Assembly and provide for the preparation of the agenda for the Synod Assembly, Synod Council, and the council's Executive Committee;
  - 3) Ensure that the constitution and bylaws of the synod and of the churchwide organization are duly observed within this synod, and that the actions of the synod in conformity therewith are carried into effect;
  - 4) Exercise supervision over the work of the other officers;
  - 5) Coordinate the work of all synod staff members;
  - 6) Appoint all committees for which provision is not otherwise made;
  - 7) Be a member of all committees and any other organizational units of the synod, except as otherwise provided in this constitution;
  - 8) Provide for preparation and maintenance of synod rosters containing the names and addresses of all rostered ministers of this synod and a record of the calls under which they are serving or the date on which their retired or disability status took effect;
  - 9) Annually bring to the attention of the Synod Council the names of all rostered ministers on leave from call or engaged in approved graduate study in conformity with the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of this church and pursuant to prior action of this synod through the Synod Council;
  - 10) Provide for prompt reporting to the secretary of this church of:
    - a) additions to and subtractions from the rosters of this synod;
    - b) the issuance of certificates of transfer for rostered ministers in good standing who have received and accepted a properly issued, duly attested, regular letter of call under the jurisdiction of another synod; and
    - c) the entrance of the names of such persons for whom proper certificates of transfer have been received;
  - 11) Provide for preparation and maintenance of a roster of the congregations of this synod and the names of the laypersons who have been elected to represent them; and
  - 12) Appoint a statistician of the synod, who shall secure the parochial reports of the congregations and make the reports available to the secretary of this church for collation, analysis, and distribution of the statistical summaries to this synod and the other synods of this church.

†S8.13. The synod bishop may appoint an attorney, admitted to the bar within the territory of the synod or the state where the synod is located, to be Synod Attorney. The appointment must be approved by the Synod Council and reported to the Synod Assembly and to the secretary of this church. The appointment continues until resignation or until a successor is appointed. The Synod Attorney provides legal advice and counsel to the synod officers and the Synod Council. The Synod Attorney is expected to be familiar with the governing documents and policies of the synod and, as necessary, to attend meetings of the Synod Council. The Synod Attorney serves without salary but may be retained and compensated for specific legal services requested by the synod.

S8.14. The synod bishop may have such assistants as this synod shall from time to time authorize.

†S8.15. The presiding bishop of this church, or the appointee of the presiding bishop, shall install into office, in accord with the policy and approved rite of this church, each newly elected synod bishop.

#### †S8.16. Conflicts of Interest

- †S8.16.01. The following procedures shall govern matters of potential conflicts of interest for synod bishops:
  - a. Whenever a synod bishop determines that a matter of the kind described in †S8.16.01.b. may require his or her determination or action with respect to a related individual as defined in †S8.16.01.c., the synod bishop shall

**Commented [PE29]:** Recommended amendment ELCA synod model constitution

withdraw from personal involvement in such matter and shall so notify the presiding bishop. The presiding bishop shall then appoint another synod bishop from the same region to handle the matter to conclusion. In dealing with such matter, the appointed bishop shall exercise all of the functions and authority to the same extent as if the appointed bishop were the elected bishop of the withdrawing bishop's synod.

- b. Matters include any proceedings under Chapter 20, proceedings under provision 7.46. of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* (†S14.18.), candidacy, reinstatement, and similar matters where determinations or actions by the synod bishop could change, limit, restrict, approve, authorize, or deny the related individual's ministry on one of the official rosters of this church.
- c. A related individual is one who, with respect to the synod bishop, is a spouse, parent, son, daughter, sibling, uncle, aunt, niece, nephew, grandparent, grandchild, including corresponding members of blended families and in-laws (parent, son, daughter, or sibling of a spouse, spouse of a sibling, or the parent or sibling of the spouse of a sibling).

**S8.20. Vice President**

†S8.21. The vice president shall be elected by the Synod Assembly. The vice president shall be a layperson. The vice president shall be a voting member of a congregation of this synod. The vice president shall not receive a salary for the performance of the duties of the office.

S8.22. The vice president shall chair the Synod Council.

†S8.23. In the event of the death, resignation, or disability of the bishop, the vice president, after consultation with the presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, shall convene the Synod Council to arrange for the conduct of the duties of the bishop until a new bishop shall be elected or, in the case of temporary disability, until the bishop resumes full performance of the duties of the office.

**S8.30. Secretary**

†S8.31. The secretary shall be elected by the Synod Assembly. The secretary shall be a voting member of a congregation of this synod. The secretary may be either a layperson or a rostered minister.

†S8.32. The secretary shall:

- a. Keep the minutes of all meetings of the Synod Assembly and Synod Council, be responsible for the printing and distribution of such minutes, and perform such other duties as this synod may from time to time direct.
- b. Be authorized and empowered, in the name of this synod, to attest all instruments which require the same, and which are signed and sealed by the bishop.
- c. In consultation with the bishop, classify and arrange all important papers and documents and deposit them in the archives of this synod.
- d. Submit to the secretary of this church at least nine months before each regular Churchwide Assembly a certified list of the voting members elected by the Synod Assembly.

**S8.40. Treasurer**

†S8.41. The treasurer may be elected by the Synod Assembly or may be appointed by the Synod Council. The treasurer shall be a voting member of a congregation of this synod. The treasurer may be either a layperson or a rostered minister.

S8.42. The treasurer shall provide and be accountable for:

- a. Management of the monies and accounts of this synod, its deeds, mortgages, contracts, evidences of claims and revenues, and trust funds, holding the same at all times subject to the order of this synod.
- b. Investment of funds upon the authorization of the Synod Council.
- c. Receipt and acknowledgment of offerings, contributions, and bequests made to this synod, collecting interest and income from its invested funds, and paying regular appropriations and orders on the several accounts as approved and directed by the Synod Council. The treasurer shall transmit each month to the treasurer of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America the funds received by this synod for the general work of this church.
- d. Maintenance of a regular account with each congregation of this synod and informing the congregation, at least quarterly, of the status of this account.
- e. Rendering at each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly a full, detailed, and duly audited report of receipts and disbursements in the several accounts of this synod for the preceding fiscal year, together with the tabulation, for record and publication in the minutes, of the contributions from the congregations.
- f. Obtaining a fidelity bond in the amount determined by the Synod Council for persons handling synod funds, which bond shall be in the custody of the secretary. The premium for the bond shall be paid by this synod. Fidelity coverage provided by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be deemed a fulfillment of this requirement.

**S8.50. General Provisions**

**†S8.51.** The terms of office of the officers of this synod shall be as follows:

- a. The bishop of this synod shall be elected to a term of six years and may be re-elected.
- b. The vice president and secretary of this synod shall be elected to a term of four (4) years and may be re-elected. The officer shall serve until his or her successor takes office.
- c. The treasurer of this synod shall be ~~appointed~~ **be [elected]** to a **four (4)-year term** and may be re-elected ~~or reappointed~~.

**S8.52.** The terms of the officers shall begin on the first day of the third full calendar month following election or, in special circumstances, at a time designated by the Synod Council. However, in the case of a bishop elected to fill a vacancy, the term shall begin as soon as the bishop has been declared elected by the presiding officer of the Synod Assembly electing this bishop.

**†S8.53.** Each officer shall be a voting member in a congregation of this synod, except that the bishop need not be a member of a congregation of this synod at the time of election.

**†S8.54.** Should the bishop die, resign, or be unable to serve, the vice president, after consultation with the presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, shall convene the Synod Council to arrange for the appropriate care of the responsibilities of the bishop until an election of a new bishop can be held or, in the case of temporary disability, until the bishop is able to serve again. Such arrangements may include the appointment by the Synod Council of an interim bishop, who during the vacancy or period of disability shall possess all of the powers and authority of a regularly elected bishop. The term of the successor bishop, elected by the next Synod Assembly or a special meeting of the Synod Assembly called for the purpose of election, shall be six years with the subsequent election to take place at the Synod Assembly closest to the expiration of such a term and with the starting date of a successor term to be governed by constitutional provision S8.52.

**S8.55.** Should the vice president, secretary, or treasurer die, resign, or be unable to serve, the bishop, with the approval of the Executive Committee of the Synod Council, shall arrange for the appropriate care of the responsibilities of the officer until an election of a new officer can be held or, in the case of temporary disability, until the officer is able to serve again. The term of the successor officer, elected by the next Synod Assembly, shall be four (4) years. ~~If the treasurer is appointed by the Synod Council, the Synod Council shall appoint a new treasurer to a \_\_\_\_\_ year term.~~

**†S8.56.** The Executive Committee of the Synod Council shall determine whether an officer is unable to serve; the officer may appeal the decision of the Executive Committee by requesting a hearing before the Synod Council. A meeting to determine the ability of an officer to serve shall be called upon the request of at least three members of the Executive Committee and prior written notice of the meeting shall be given to the officer in question at least 10 calendar days prior to the meeting.

**†S8.57.** The recall or dismissal of an officer and the vacating of office may be effected for willful disregard or violation of the constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of this church; for such physical or mental disability as renders the officer incapable of performing the duties of office; or for such conduct as would subject the officer to disciplinary action as a rostered minister or as a member of a congregation of this church.

- a. Proceedings for the recall or dismissal of a synod bishop shall be instituted by written petition by:
  - 1) the Synod Council on an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of its elected members present and voting;
  - 2) the Synod Assembly on an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of its members present and voting;
  - 3) at least 10 synod bishops; or
  - 4) the presiding bishop of this church.
- b. Proceedings for the recall or dismissal of an officer of a synod, other than the synod bishop, shall be instituted by written petition by:
  - 1) the Synod Council on an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of its elected members present and voting;
  - 2) the Synod Assembly on an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of its members present and voting; or
  - 3) the synod bishop.
- c. The petition shall be filed with the chair of the Committee on Appeals (in care of the secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 8765 West Higgins Road, Chicago, Illinois 60631) and shall set forth the specific charge or charges.
- d. Upon the filing of a written petition, the Executive Committee of the Synod Council may temporarily suspend the officer from service in the synod without prejudice, but with continuation of compensation, including benefits, if the officer is a salaried employee of the synod.
- e. In the case of alleged physical or mental incapacity of an officer of the synod, the procedures outlined in †S8.56. shall be followed, and such officer shall comply with the decision of the Synod Council. If such officer fails or refuses to comply, the Synod Council may proceed to petition for recall or dismissal as follows:

**Commented [PE30]:** The ELCA model constitution allows Synods to select election of the Treasurer by the Synod Assembly or appointment by the Synod Council. Historically we have elected our Treasurer.

**Commented [PE31]:** Amended to comply with current practice

- 1) the Synod Council will submit a written report of their findings and the basis of their decision to the Committee on Appeals.
  - 2) the Committee on Appeals, other than those who are disqualified, shall review the findings and decision of the Synod Council and by an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of those present and voting may adopt the findings and grant the petition.
- f. If the synod officer is a minister of Word and Sacrament, grounds for recall or dismissal include those set forth in ELCA bylaw 20.22.01. and as defined under the process described in ELCA constitutional provisions 20.21. and 20.22. as grounds for discipline. If the officer is a minister of Word and Service, grounds for recall or dismissal include those set forth in ELCA bylaw 20.23.01. and as defined under the process described in ELCA constitutional provisions 20.21. and 20.22. as grounds for discipline.
- g. If the officer is a layperson, grounds for recall or dismissal include those set forth in ELCA bylaw 20.41.01. as grounds for discipline.
- h. If the case of alleged willful disregard or violation of the constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions or of alleged conduct as would subject the officer to disciplinary action, the following procedures shall apply:
- 1) the petition shall be referred to the Committee on Appeals, which shall function as the discipline hearing committee that shall conduct a hearing in accordance with the rules provided for in ELCA bylaw 20.22.14. except to the extent that those rules are in conflict with the provisions of this bylaw; and
  - 2) the members of the Committee on Appeals, other than those who are disqualified, may grant the petition by an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of those present and voting.
- i. Written notice of a decision by the Committee on Appeals that the charges have been sustained shall be given to the affected officer and to the Synod Council, and the office shall be vacated.
- †S8.58. If the bishop is to be temporarily absent from the synod for an extended period, the bishop, with the consent of the Synod Council, may appoint as acting bishop for such period a minister of Word and Sacrament of this church. Except as limited by action of the Synod Council, an acting bishop shall possess all of the powers and authority of a regularly elected bishop other than authority to ordain or to authorize the ordination of properly approved candidates for ordination.

## Chapter 9.

### NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

- †S9.01. The Synod Assembly shall elect such officers of this synod and such other persons as the constitution and bylaws may require, according to procedures set forth in the bylaws. The Synod Assembly shall elect members of the Churchwide Assembly in accordance with bylaw 12.41.11. of the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- S9.01.A20 Those elected by the Synod Assembly shall serve until such time as their successors are elected except as may otherwise be provided for in the constitution and bylaws of this synod.
- †S9.02. In all elections by the Synod Assembly, other than for the bishop, a majority of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election.
- S9.03. There shall be a Nominating Committee consisting of **twelve (12) members** who shall be appointed as provided in the bylaws chapter 11 by the Synod Council to serve for each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly. The committee shall be comprised of eight (8) members, of which there will be one (1) member from each conference. In addition, there shall be four (4) members who shall be at-large members. These member appointments shall be consistent with the guidelines provided for in S11.13. and †S6.04. of the Northern Illinois Synod Constitution. A chairperson shall be appointed by the bishop. Additional nominations may be made from the floor of the Assembly for all elections for which nominations are made by the Nominating Committee.
- S9.04. The bishop shall be elected by the Synod Assembly by ecclesiastical ballot. Three-fourths of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election on the first ballot. If no one is elected, the first ballot shall be considered the nominating ballot. Three-fourths of the legal votes cast on the second ballot shall be necessary for election. The third ballot shall be limited to the seven persons (plus ties) who received the greatest number of legal votes on the second ballot, and two-thirds of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. The fourth ballot shall be limited to the three persons (plus ties) who receive the greatest number of legal votes on the third ballot, and 60 percent of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. On subsequent ballots a majority of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. These ballots shall be limited to the two persons (plus ties) who receive the greatest number of legal votes on the previous ballot.

**Commented [PE32]:** Continuing Resolution approved by Synod Council on May 16, 2020.

**Commented [PE33]:** Amendment recommended by ELCA synod model constitution

**Commented [PE34]:** Amended to provide clarity concerning committee make-up.



- S9.05.** The Nominating Committee shall nominate at least one person for vice president; additional nominations may be made from the floor.
- S9.06.** The Synod Council shall nominate at least one person for secretary; additional nominations may be made from the floor.
- S9.07.** If the treasurer is elected, the Synod Council shall nominate at least one person for treasurer; additional nominations may be made from the floor.
- S9.08.** In all elections, except for the bishop, the names of the persons receiving the highest number of legal votes, but not elected by a majority of the legal votes cast on a preceding ballot, shall be entered on the next ballot to the number of two for each vacancy unfilled. On any ballot when only two names appear, a majority of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election.
- S9.08.01** When there are two (2) or more candidates nominated for multiple positions on a ballot, each voting member may cast a number of votes equivalent to the number of positions open, but no more than one (1) vote for any one (1) candidate. Those candidates receiving the highest numbers of votes among those receiving such a majority up to the number of openings available, shall be declared elected. If there is not a sufficient number of candidates so qualifying for election, those candidates with the highest number of votes shall be entered on the next ballot to the number of two (2) for each opening unfilled. When there is more than one vacancy for an elected position on a committee, the ballot shall be constructed in such a manner that each vacant position is elected separately. Each voting member votes for a candidate for each position available. The candidate receiving the majority vote shall be declared elected. If a majority is not achieved, then the two (2) candidates receiving the highest number of votes shall be placed on the next ballot.
- S9.09.** The result of each ballot in every election shall be announced in detail to the assembly.
- †S9.10.** When notified by the secretary of this church, on behalf of the Nominating Committee of the Churchwide Assembly, the Synod Assembly shall nominate two persons in the specified categories for possible election by the Churchwide Assembly to the Church Council.
- S9.11.** The Synod Council shall may elect or appoint representatives to the steering committee of its region.
- †S9.12.** Background checks and screening shall be required and completed for persons nominated as synod officers prior to their election, if possible, or as soon as practical after their election. The specific procedures and timing of background checks and screening shall be determined by the Synod Council.
- S9.12.A11.** The Synod Council Executive Committee shall provide for background checks for persons nominated for synodical a synod office prior to the Synod Assembly at which the election will take place or as soon as possible after the Synod Assembly for newly elected officers nominated from the floor who were not identified as nominees prior to the Assembly. The process shall be as follows:
- Prior to the Synod Assembly appropriate notice of the background check requirement and protocol will be provided to voting members, potential nominees, and others as directed by the Synod Council.
  - Nominees and newly elected officers are required to provide written consent to a background check and all information necessary to complete a background check, which should be completed prior to the Synod Assembly with respect to nominees and prior to installation for newly elected officers, if possible.
  - The Synod Council's Executive Committee shall designate one Executive Committee or Synod Council member to obtain the background checks.
  - All background checks for nominees and newly elected officers will entail a criminal background check. A financial background check will be completed for nominees for treasurer. The Executive Committee shall decide whether additional types of background checks are appropriate for each officer position.
  - The background check results shall be provided to that nominee or elected officer and to the Synod Council's Executive Committee. Further disclosure of the results may be determined by the Executive Committee.
  - The Executive Committee may adopt other procedures or protocols as are necessary to provide for background checks for nominees and newly elected synodical officers and shall report such actions to the Synod Council.
- S9.13.** Except as otherwise provided herein, all members of the committees, boards, or other organizational units of this synod shall be elected to three-year terms.
- S9.14.** With the exception of ministers of Word and Sacrament rostered in a synod other than their synod of residence, each member of the Synod Assembly, Synod Council, committee, board, or other organizational unit of this synod shall be a voting member of a congregation of this synod.

**Commented [PE35]:** new language for clarity

**Commented [PE36]:** Allows for flexibility in the ministry work of the region.

**Commented [PE37]:** Amended to comply with ELCA synod mode constitution

**Commented [PE38]:** Grammar correction

**Commented [PE39]:** Grammar correction



## Chapter 10.

### SYNOD COUNCIL

- †S10.01. The Synod Council, consisting of the four officers of the synod, 10 to 24 other members, and at least one youth and at least one young adult, shall be elected by the Synod Assembly.
- Each person elected to the Synod Council shall be a voting member of a congregation of this synod, with the exception of ministers on a roster of this synod who reside outside the territory of this synod. The process for election and the term of office when not otherwise provided shall be specified in the bylaws. A member of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, unless otherwise elected as a voting member of the Synod Council, may serve as an advisory member of the Synod Council with voice but not vote.
  - The term of office of members of the Synod Council, with the exception of the officers and the youth member, shall be three (3) years.
- S10.01.01. The terms of members of the Synod Council shall begin the day of the first regularly scheduled Synod Council meeting following their election and shall end at the close of the day prior to such meeting at the end of their terms of office.
- S10.01.02. The Synod Council shall be composed of the four (4) officers of this synod, twelve (12) other members elected at large, one (1) youth member and one (1) young adult.
- S10.01.03. The twelve (12) at-large members, (1) youth member and (1) young adult member shall be nominated by the nominating committee and shall be elected by the Synod Assembly.
- S10.01.04. A representative of the women's organization, the men's organization, and the youth organization may have an advisory role in the Synod Council. Such representatives would be accorded the privilege of voice but not vote at Synod Council meetings.
- S10.01.05. Each at-large member of the Synod Council shall be elected to staggered three-year terms with one-third of such terms expiring each year. The youth member shall be elected to a one-year term, and may be reelected to a second one-year term.
- S10.01.06. The youth member of the Synod Council shall be a confirmed member of a congregation of this synod and shall be at least fifteen (15) and less than eighteen (18) Nineteen (19) years of age when elected.
- †S10.02. The Synod Council shall be the board of directors of this synod and shall serve as its interim legislative authority between meetings of the Synod Assembly. It may make decisions that are not in conflict with actions taken by the Synod Assembly or that are not precluded by provisions of this constitution or the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- S10.03. The functions of the Synod Council shall be to:
- Exercise trusteeship responsibilities on behalf of this synod.
  - Recommend program goals and budgets to the regular meetings of the Synod Assembly.
  - Carry out the resolutions of the Synod Assembly.
  - Provide for an annual review of the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament and the roster of Ministers of Word and Service, receive and act upon appropriate recommendations regarding those persons whose status is subject to reconsideration and action under the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and make a report to the Synod Assembly of the Synod Council's actions in this regard.
  - Issue letters of call to rostered ministers as authorized by Chapter 7 of the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
  - Fill vacancies until the next regular meeting of the Synod Assembly, except as may otherwise be provided in the constitution or bylaws of this synod, and determine the fact of the incapacity of an officer of this synod.
  - Report its actions to the regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.
  - Elect or ratify the representatives of this synod who are to serve, in addition to the bishop ex officio, on the governing boards of church affiliated health, social service, educational and other such designated agencies or institutions to which this synod is related.
  - Perform such other functions as are set forth in the bylaws of this synod, or as may be delegated to it by the Synod Assembly.
- S10.04. Any proposal to appropriate funds, whether by amendment to the budget or otherwise, which is presented to a meeting of the Synod Assembly without the approval of the Synod Council, shall require a two-thirds vote for adoption.
- S10.05. No elected member of the Synod Council shall receive compensation for such service.

Commented [PE40]: Added to come into compliance with ELCA synod model constitution.

Commented [PE41]: Changed to come into compliance with ELCA synod model constitution.

**S10.06.** If a member of the Synod Council ceases to meet the requirements of the position to which she or he was elected, the office filled by such member shall at once become vacant.

**S10.07.** The composition of the Synod Council, the number of its members, and the manner of their selection, as well as the organization of the Synod Council, its additional duties and responsibilities, and the number of meetings to be held each year shall be as set forth in the bylaws.

**S10.07.01.** ~~To the extent permitted by state law, meetings of the Synod Council and its committees may be held electronically or by telephone conference and notice of all meeting may be provided electronically.~~ The Synod Council shall meet at least three (3) times per year at a place and time determined by the Synod Council and/or the bishop of the synod. Additional meetings may be called by the bishop of the synod, the chairperson of the Council and if requested, by five (5) members of the Council.

**Commented [PE42]:** Redundant language to S10.08.01.

**S10.07.02.** The Synod Council will supervise continuing support for pastors and congregations and for the agencies and institutions which provide ministry on behalf of the synod. The Synod Council's responsibilities shall include the following areas:

a. Provide leadership recruitment, preparation, and support in accordance with Churchwide standards and policies.

b. Establish a nominating committee to provide a list of nominees for elected positions, boards, and committees to be presented to the Synod Assembly. This includes requesting and assembling biographical data on nominees.

**Commented [PE43]:** Spelling correction

c. Establish an appointment process to provide nominees to the council for non-elected members of committees of the synod.

d. Establish policy and appointments/election procedures for retired clergy voting members to the Synod Assembly.

e. Provide guidelines for selection of voting members to the Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA.

f. provide for discipline of congregations rostered ministers, establishing, procedures for termination of call, adjudication, and appeals which shall be consistent with the procedures established by the church.

g. Supervise functions of the Consultation Committee and Discipline Committee.

h. Prepare a synod budget.

i. Foster interdependent relationships among the Churchwide organizations, the synods, and the congregations, and enter into partnership with other synods in the region.

j. Foster interdependent relationships among the Churchwide organizations, the synods, and the congregations, and enter into partnership with other synods in the region.

k. Cooperate with other synods and the Churchwide organization in creating, using, and supporting regions to carry out the functions of the synod which can best be done cooperatively with other synods and the Churchwide organization.

l. Provide for archives in conjunction with other synods.

m. Consider, assess, and recommend to the Synod Assembly approval or rejection of proposed amendments to the constitution and bylaws of the synod.

n. ~~Consider, assess, and approve or reject proposed amendments to the constitution and bylaws of the congregations of the synod.~~ Provide for the consideration, assessment, and approval or rejection of proposed amendments to the constitution and bylaws of the congregations of the synod.

**Commented [PE44]:** Amended to comply with S11.01.A19.

o. Assist the bishop of this synod in interviewing pastors who seek special calls or part-time calls to ministry. Extend or approve calls as appropriate

p. Provide for the general administration of the synod including the supervision of legal and property matters pertaining to the synod and develop a process to recognize and/or support Lutheran ministries within or beyond the borders of this synod.

q. Assist in communicating the synod's concerns and programs to the congregations and assist congregations in enhancing the communication process within the congregation, both in printed and audio-visual formats.

**S10.07.A88.** The Synod Council shall appoint all non-elected members of Committees specified in Chapter 11. upon nomination by the Bishop, to serve at the pleasure of the Synod Council. Appointed members shall be designated for staggered three (3) year terms except as otherwise provided in the Synod Constitution and Bylaws provided that non-officer members of the Synod Executive Committee shall be appointed to serve one (1) year terms. Terms of subcommittees or task forces ~~created under S11.08~~ shall serve for such term as the constitution body of such subcommittee or task force specifies

**Commented [PE45]:** Citation correction for clarification

**S10.07.A91.** The Synod Council of the Northern Illinois Synod, ELCA, establishes that for the Churchwide Assembly, the Vice President shall be a voting member of the Northern Illinois Synod, with the Secretary being the alternate voting member; and that this person shall assist the bishop and assume the position of chair of the Synod ~~delegation contingent~~ whenever the bishop so directs.

**S10.07.A95.** Each Conference shall nominate one (1) member and one (1) alternate voting member from each conference to the Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The names of the individuals so nominated shall be placed in a resolution from the Nominating Committee that states that the individual named have been nominated by the conferences and that approval of the resolution before the Synod Assembly constitutes their election to the Churchwide Assembly.

The balance of authorized voting members to a given Churchwide Assembly will be nominated by The Nominating Committee and elected by the Synod Assembly, with the persons receiving the highest number of votes for each position voted upon being the voting member and the persons receiving the second highest number of votes being the alternate voting member.

**S10.07.B95.** When neither a voting member nor the alternate voting member is able to attend the Churchwide Assembly, the synod council shall name a replacement for the voting member unable to attend, if there is a scheduled meeting of Council in time to perform this function. If not, the Bishop shall name a voting member who is able and willing to attend the Assembly, ~~so that the Synod will be appropriately represented.~~

**S10.08.** Robert's Rules of Order, latest edition, shall govern parliamentary procedure of all meetings of the Synod Council.

**S10.08.01.** ~~To the extent permitted by state law, meetings of the Synod Council and its committees may be held electronically or by telephone conference, and notice of all meetings may be provided electronically.~~

**Commented [PE46]:** Amended for clarity

**Commented [PE47]:** Unnecessary language

**Commented [PE48]:** Recommended amendments of ELCA synod model constitution

## Chapter 11.

### COMMITTEES

(names of other organizational units)

†**S11.01.** There shall be an Executive Committee, a Consultation Committee, a Committee on Discipline, a Mutual Ministry Committee, an Audit Committee, and such other committees as this synod may from time to time determine. The duties and functions of such committees, or any other organizational units created by this synod, and the composition and organizational structure of such units, shall be as set forth in this constitution or in the bylaws or continuing resolutions, and shall be subject to any applicable provisions or requirements of the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

**S11.01.01.** The Executive Committee of this synod shall be composed of six (6) members. Four (4) members shall be the four (4) officers of the synod and two (2) members shall be members of the Synod Council elected by the Synod Council.

**S11.01.A88.** The Executive Committee is designated the Administrative Committee of the Synod Council to fulfill the policy determination of the Council.

**S11.01.A92.** The Bishop shall appoint the chairpersons of the committees of the Synod Council on a yearly basis.

**S11.01.A19.** There shall be a Constitution Review Committee of not less than two members appointed by the Synod Council based on the recommendation of the Bishop. Appointments shall be reviewed annually by the Synod Council. The committee shall be responsible for the reviewing, approving or disapproving proposed changes to the congregation governing documents submitted to the synod for approval. The committee shall determine compliance of the proposed changes with the most current *ELCA Model Constitution for Congregations*, and it shall notify the congregation of its decision to approve or disapprove the proposed changes. The committee shall report to the Synod Council of its final action.

**S11.01.02.** The Synod Mutual Ministry Committee shall be appointed by the Synod Council in consultation with the bishop.

~~**S11.01.03.** The Nominating Committee of this synod shall be comprised of sixteen members, two per conference, and shall be appointed by the Synod Council. A chairperson shall be appointed by the Synod Council. All members shall serve two year terms, with terms staggered to replace half the committee each year.~~

~~**S11.01.A89.** Each Conference will nominate two (2) members of the Nominating Committee under a procedure administered by the Bishop which is consistent with the guidelines for the inclusiveness of this church.~~

**S11.01.04.** There shall ~~may~~ be an Appointment/Specialized Ministry Committee chosen from the Synod Council and composed of no more than four (4) members. The chairperson is to be appointed by the Bishop. These members will be appointed in keeping with S11.13. and †S6.04. of the Northern Illinois Synod Constitution. The Bishop (or Bishop's designee) (will serve on this committee as an ex officio member without vote. Terms of office shall be staggered for two (2) year terms, with the exception of the Bishop (or Bishop's designee) and will be in keeping with †S9.10. of

**Commented [PE50]:** Redundant language to provision S9.03.

**Commented [PE51]:** Amended to reflect current practice

Revised Draft January 2020; May 2020, December 2020

As amended to comply with Model Constitution for Synods: August 2019,

As amended by Synod Council Action: September 2019, January 2021

the Northern Illinois Synod Constitution. When no Appointment/Specialized Ministry Committee is formed, the Executive Committee of the Synod Council shall serve in its stead.

**Commented [PE52]:** Changes to reflect current practice

**Commented [PE53]:** Amended to reflect current practice

**S11.01.A93.** The Appointment/Specialized Ministry Committee is to be called together by the Bishop (or Bishop's designee) whenever the Synod receives a request from a board, institution or agency that representation is needed on said board, institution or agency. When making an appointment to a board, institution, or agency the Appointment/Specialized Ministry Committee contacts the candidate to see if he/she is interested in serving. After he/she has responded affirmatively, the Committee notifies the Bishop (or Bishop's designee) that such an appointment has been made and the Bishop brings this information to the next Synod Council meeting for ratification. The Appointment/Specialized Ministry Committee shall also review calls issued by the Synod Council and provide continuing support for those in specialized ministry (e.g. directors, counselors, vice presidents of church relations, campus ministry pastors, professors, chaplains, etc.) and those persons On Leave from Call and Study Leave)

**S11.01.07.** There shall be a Finance Committee composed of seven (7) to eight (8) members. Two (2) members shall be the Bishop and Treasurer of the Synod and three (3) members shall be members of the Synod Council, elected by the Synod Council. The Treasurer may appoint, with the approval of the Executive Committee, up to three (3) additional members of the committee who do not serve on the Synod Council. These people will be appointed in keeping with S11.13. and †S6.04. of the Northern Illinois Synod Constitution. In addition, the Synod Vice President, Assistant to the Bishop for Administration bishop's assistant to the bishop designee, and bookkeeper will serve as ex officio members to this committee without vote. Terms of office will be staggered three (3) year terms, with the exception of the Bishop, Treasurer, and the three (3) ex officio members. Terms of office will be in keeping with S9.11. of the Northern Illinois Synod Constitution.

**Commented [PE54]:** Amended to provide for current assistant titles

**Commented [PE55]:** Redundant language

**S11.01.08.** There shall be a Jenny Lind Chapel Committee to oversee the operation of the Chapel in Andover, Illinois and to preserve its significant spiritual and cultural contribution to the heritage of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Northern Illinois Synod. This Committee shall report to and be responsible to the Synod Council of the Northern Illinois Synod in the conduct of its duties and also shall report to regular meetings of the Synod Assembly.

The Committee shall consist of at least four (4) members of the Northern Illinois Synod appointed by the Synod Council for terms of ~~three (3) years~~ six (6) years. The Committee will also include the Treasurer of the synod or her/his appointee who shall be responsible for communication between the Synod Council and the committee. Beyond these persons, additional appointments both of members and non-members of the Northern Illinois Synod may be made by the Synod Council, although Synod members must always make up a two-thirds majority of the Committee. Task Forces will consist of the Endowment Committee Building/Grounds, Development/Planning, Programming, and any other task forces which may be deemed necessary by the Committee. The Endowment Committee members will serve terms of six (6) years and may be reelected. These task forces shall report to the Jenny Lind Chapel Committee which is responsible for their activities.

**Commented [PE56]:** More clearly reflects current practice

**†S11.02.** The Consultation Committee of this synod shall consist of at least six persons and not more than 12 persons, of whom half shall be ministers of Word and Sacrament and half shall be laypersons, who shall each be elected by the Synod Assembly for a term of six years without consecutive re-election. The functions of the Consultation Committee are set forth in Chapter 20 of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* and in Chapter 17 of this constitution. The size of the Consultation Committee, in accord with this provision, shall be defined in this synod's bylaws.

**†S11.03.** The Committee on Discipline of this synod shall consist of twelve persons, of whom six shall be ministers of Word and Sacrament and six shall be laypersons, who shall each be elected by the Synod Assembly for a term of six years without consecutive re-election.

a. The functions of the Committee on Discipline of this synod are set forth in Chapter 20 of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*.

b. The Synod Council shall fill vacancies on the Committee on Discipline for any unexpired term.

**†S11.04.** The Mutual Ministry Committee shall be appointed by the Executive Committee of the Synod Council to provide support and counsel to the bishop.

**†S11.05.** The Audit Committee of this synod shall consist of three to six persons, none of whom is a member of the synod staff. Up to half of the committee members may be Synod Council members. The Audit Committee members shall be elected by the Synod Council for a term of three years and be eligible for re-election to a second consecutive three-year term. The terms of the Audit Committee members shall be staggered. The Audit Committee shall be responsible for assisting the Synod Council in fulfilling its general oversight of the synod's accounting, financial reporting, internal control systems, and external audit processes as provided in †S15.31.

**S11.06.** There shall be a Candidacy Committee which shall be responsible for guiding candidates during their period of preparation for the roster of Word and Sacrament and the roster of Word and Service. This committee, which shall be chaired by the bishop or his/her designee, shall also examine qualifications of candidates for ordination or for reception from other church bodies. This committee shall also be responsible for determining the qualifications of synod authorized ministers as well as providing guidelines and policies regarding supervision and education of these candidates.

**S11.06.01.** This committee shall have twelve (12) members, all of whom shall be appointed by the bishop. Six (6) members shall be rostered ministers, four (4) members shall be laypersons, two (2) members may be rostered ministers or laypersons. Members shall serve a four (4) year term and may serve up to two (2) terms.

**S11.07.** There shall be a committee on Ministry Support.

**S11.07.01.** The ministry in which the Committee on Ministry Support will be involved is described in †S6.03.a-d. of this constitution.

**S11.07.02.** This committee shall have responsibility for the following areas:

a. ~~In the areas of certification preparation and ordination this committee shall assume responsibility for church vocations such as the examination of candidates for ordained ministry, evaluation of candidates, and career guidance of professional leaders in training.~~

a.b. In the area of support/professional care this committee shall:

1. serve as advocate for all professionals on their relationships with agencies, ~~pastors~~, rostered ministers and the larger church.
2. support ~~clergy-rostered ministers~~ and professional lay leaders in the field.
3. provide care and resources, including boundaries training, for the synod's ~~clergy~~ rostered ministers and lay professionals and their families.
4. develop compensation guidelines and assist congregations in evaluating ~~pastoral~~ rostered ministers and lay compensation.
5. provide resources for drug and alcohol problems in ~~clergy, rostered ministers~~ lay professionals and their families

b.e. In the area of theological and continuing education support this committee shall:

1. support and develop relationships with seminaries within this synod's region or through seminaries assigned to this synod's region.
2. encourage and review the role of continuing education in professional development.

**S11.07.03.** This committee shall have twelve (12) members, eight (8) members shall be elected by the Synod Assembly. Four (4) members shall be appointed by the Synod Council upon the recommendation of the bishop

**S11.08.** There shall be a committee on Congregational Life.

**S11.08.01.** This committee shall have responsibility for the following areas:

a. Providing resources for congregational life by:

1. Providing resources to congregations and worship leaders, both lay and ordained to enrich the worship life of the congregations and synod events.
2. Providing resources for parish education and by providing resource centers for a wide variety of materials, which includes training for Safe Church initiatives, and audio-visuals.
3. Assisting congregations with parish planning programs that are both Biblically (theologically) and professionally sound.

b. Supporting ministry of the laity by encouraging lay participation in the wide variety of church programs and by developing an awareness of ministry for individuals.

c. Supporting an overall Stewardship program by:

1. fostering financial support for the work of the church by individuals and congregations.
2. providing for stewardship resource persons in all areas of the synod to assist with interpreting the program of the synod and assisting congregations to develop local stewardship programs.
3. supporting Churchwide stewardship efforts.
4. assisting in communication and interpretation of synodical and Churchwide ministries.

d. Supporting youth ministry by:

1. providing leadership to this synod and local congregations in ministry to and with youth.
2. working through the synod, conferences and clusters in developing leaders to assist with youth programs and provide leadership training events for youth and leaders.

**Commented [PE57]:** Creates a committee rather than a subcommittee.

**Commented [PE58]:** Amended to create a standing committee

**Commented [PE59]:** Removed candidacy language to comply with S11.06.

**Commented [PE60]:** Amended to comply with ELCA language in synod model constitution section on rostered ministers. Also includes language that reflects the actual work of the committee.

**Commented [PE61]:** Added for clarity and to reflect current practice

**Commented [PE62]:** Reflects the actual work of the committee

3. providing opportunity and supporting synodical and Churchwide youth events

**S11.08.02.** This committee shall have twelve (12) members of which eight (8) members shall be elected by the Synod Assembly and four (4) members shall be appointed by the Synod Council upon the recommendation of the bishop.

**Commented [PE63]:** Amended for clarity

**S11.09.** There shall be a committee on Outreach.

**S11.09.01.** The Outreach Committee shall have responsibility for the following areas:

a. New Ministries and Existing Ministries

1. investigate and encourage development of new congregations and new ministries in the geographical area of this synod.
2. review and recommend grants for those congregations of this synod which need assistance from Churchwide mission funds.
3. stimulate local congregations to emphasize mission development and support of new mission opportunities.
4. support town and country ministries by serving parishioners and pastors rostered ministers in farm-related congregations and communities of this synod who are impacted by factors such as small size, difficult socio-economic conditions, isolated location, and limited resources.
5. support urban and multicultural ministers.

**Commented [PE64]:** Amended to comply with ELCA synod model constitution section on rostered ministers

b. Evangelism

1. recruit, train, and support persons in the synod to enable them to consult with church councils and evangelism committees to do planning and preparation for evangelism programs.
2. provide resource materials for mission emphasis and evangelism.
3. develop experimental evangelism programs to stimulate membership and activity of congregations.

c. Ecumenical Guidance

1. support inter-denominational contacts and programs.
2. serve as liaison to the ecumenical agencies to which the synod relates, and in cooperation with other relevant synods suggest persons who may be appointed as representatives to those agencies.
3. plan and evaluate use of budgeted funds for ecumenical agencies.

**S11.09.02.** This committee shall have twelve (12) members of which eight (8) members shall be elected by the Synod Assembly, and four (4) members shall be appointed by the Synod Council upon the recommendation of the bishop.

**Commented [PE65]:** Amended for clarity

**S11.10.** There shall be a committee on Social Ministry.

**S11.10.01.** The Social Ministry Committee shall have responsibility in the following areas:

a. Social Statement Interpretation

1. interpret social statements of the church in a manner consistent with the interpretation given by the Churchwide agency which assisted in the development of the statement.
2. prepare resolutions for consideration at synod assemblies and congregational life conferences, and for individual congregational study and action.
3. initiate social issues study programs.

b. Social Action and Advocacy

1. encourage synod members to participate responsibly in society.
2. develop plans to implement social statements and approved resolutions.
3. recommend ways that this synod and congregations may participate in ecumenical social action programs.
4. emphasize the social implications and church's role in promoting racial inclusiveness and ethnic diversity.
5. emphasize issues of justice and equality for women and men and work with other synodical program units to effect just treatment of women and men as equals in the church.
6. emphasize the role of the church in promoting peace and international disarmament.
7. motivate congregations to participate in Churchwide world hunger programs and in other ways support the cause of hunger alleviation and global justice.
8. provide resources and information in areas of social concern.

**Commented [PE66]:** Amended to comply with ELCA synod model constitution

c. Social Care

1. assist congregations in all areas of social advocacy and service by providing support, training, and resources to facilitate congregational ministry and also to be alert to emerging social needs.
2. assist congregations to be caring communities in the areas of alcohol and mood-altering substances abuse, understanding the needs of people with disabilities, advocating a wellness ministry, and supporting feed hungry-at-home programs.

d. Social Agency Support

1. supervise and coordinate this synod's relationship to and support of constituent social agencies.

2. support the work of social ministry organizations both within and beyond synod boundaries which are recognized accredited but are neither synod-owned nor directly supported.

**S11.10.02.** This committee shall have twelve (12) members of which eight (8) members shall be elected by the Synod Assembly, and four (4) members shall be appointed by the Synod Council upon the recommendation of the bishop.

**Commented [PE67]:** Amended for clarity

**S11.11.** There shall be a committee for Global Mission.

**S11.11.01.** The Global Mission Committee will have responsibility for the following areas:

- a. Engaging the members and resources of the Synod and its congregations in missions of accompaniment outside the U.S.A.
- b. Work with the ELCA Global Mission unit and other Christian churches, agencies and institutions.
  1. Encourage each congregation to sponsor missionaries long-term and short-term.
  2. Recruit synod members to serve as missionaries.
  3. Encourage synod members to attend annual Global Mission Events.
- c. Fostering Companion Synod relationships.
  1. Encourage synod members to visit our Companion Synods.
  2. Encourage synod members to host missionaries and visitors from outside our borders.
  3. Encourage congregations to enter into Congregation/Parrish partnerships within our Companion Synods.
- d. Providing and disseminating Global Mission resource materials to synod members at synod gatherings, through congregational interpreters, and through the synod webpage and publications.
- e. Share insights and ideas gained from Christian and inter-cultural experiences around the world.

**S11.11.02.** This committee shall have twelve (12) members of which eight (8) members shall be elected by the Synod Assembly, and four (4) members shall be appointed by the Synod Council upon the recommendation of the bishop.

**Commented [PE68]:** Amended for clarity

#### **S11.12. General Provisions**

**S11.13.** This synod shall in its bylaws or by continuing resolution establish a process to ensure that the members of its committees and other organizational units will be persons possessing the necessary knowledge and competence to be effective members of such units, and to meet the requirements of †S6.04. With the exception of ministers on the rosters of this synod who reside outside the territory of this synod, each member of a committee of this synod, or any other organizational unit created by this synod, shall be a voting member of a congregation of this synod.

**S11.14.** Subcommittees of the standing committees and task forces may be established by the Synod Assembly or the Synod Council. Standing committees may also establish and appoint members to subcommittees necessary to the discharge of their responsibilities provided such establishment and appointment may be overridden by the Synod Council at its next regular meeting. Except as provided herein members of the subcommittee may be appointed by the Synod Council upon recommendation by the parent committee. Members of task forces shall be appointed by the Synod Council upon recommendation of the Bishop the bishop or the Synod Council unless otherwise provided for by the Synod Assembly.

**Commented [PE69]:** Amended to increase efficiency

## **Chapter 12.**

### **CONFERENCES, CLUSTERS, COALITIONS AREA SUBDIVISIONS, AND NETWORKS**

**†S12.01.** This synod may establish conferences, clusters, coalitions, area subdivisions, and networks as appropriate within its territory and in collaboration with other synods and entities, as specified in the bylaws and continuing resolutions. The purpose of such groupings shall be to foster interdependent relationships for missional purposes among congregations, synods, the churchwide organization, and other affiliates.

**S12.01.01.** The membership of each conference shall be constituted as follows:

**Commented [PE70]:** Changes made to reflect current congregations and to change to a continuing resolution for ease of updating and maintaining accuracy.

**S12.01.20A.** The membership of each conference shall be constituted as follows:

#### **Central Conference**

Amboy, Immanuel  
Ashton, St. John's  
Byron, All Saints  
Compton, Immanuel

#### **East Conference**

Bolingbrook, Joyful Spirit  
Bolingbrook, New Life  
Channahon, Resurrection  
Crest Hill, Theodore Street

Revised Draft January 2020; May 2020, December 2020

As amended to comply with Model Constitution for Synods: August 2019,

As amended by Synod Council Action: September 2019, January 2021



Dixon, Immanuel  
Dixon, St. Paul  
Forreston, Faith  
Forreston, St. James  
Manlius, Trinity  
Morrison, Bethesda  
Mt. Morris, Trinity  
~~Nachusa, St. Paul's~~  
Oregon, Emmanuel  
Polo, St. Mark's  
Prophetstown, First  
Rochelle, Faith  
Rock Falls, Immanuel  
Sterling, First of Jordan  
Sterling, St. John's  
Sterling, St. Paul  
Oregon, Freedom

#### **North Conference**

Belvidere, Christ  
Belvidere, Zion  
Capron, Capron  
Loves Park, Grace  
Machesney Park, GPS Faith Community  
Rockford, Alpine  
Rockford, Bethlehem  
Rockford, Calvary  
Rockford, Emmanuel  
Rockford, First  
Rockford, Gloria Dei  
Rockford, Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd  
Rockford, Our Savior's  
Rockford, Salem  
Rockford, Shepherd of the Valley  
Rockford, St. Mark  
~~Rockford, Tabor~~  
  
Rockford, Trinity  
Rockford, United  
Rockford, Zion  
Roscoe, Cross & Crown  
South Beloit, Faith

#### **Northwest Conference**

Chadwick, First  
Durand, Trinity

Gardner, United  
Homer Glen, Cross of Glory  
Joliet, Bethlehem  
Joliet, Faith  
Joliet, First  
Joliet, Santa Cruz  
Joliet, St. John  
Lockport, Shepherd of the Hill  
Minooka, Plattville  
Morris, Peace  
Naperville, Alleluia!  
New Lenox, Peace  
Plainfield, Followers of Christ  
Plano, First  
~~Romeoville, Good Shepherd~~  
Sandwich, Our Savior  
Sandwich, Salem  
Wilmington, Grace  
Yorkville, Immanuel

#### **Northeast Conference**

Algonquin, Light of Christ  
Cary, St. Barnabas  
~~Creston, St. John's~~  
Crystal Lake, Bethany  
Crystal Lake, Living Waters  
DeKalb, Bethlehem  
DeKalb, First  
Harvard, Trinity  
Hebron, St. John's  
Huntley, Shepherd of the Prairie  
Johnsburg, Joyful Harvest  
Lee, First  
McHenry, Shepherd of the Hills  
Richmond, Grace  
Sycamore, Salem  
Wonder Lake, Nativity  
Woodstock, Grace

~~Woodstock, Redeemer~~

#### **South Conference**

Earlville, Immanuel  
~~Granville, First~~



Elizabeth, St. John  
 Elizabeth, Trinity  
 Freeport, First  
 Freeport, Prince of Peace  
 Galena, Lord of Love  
 Hanover, St. Paul  
 Kent, St. Paul  
 Lanark, Trinity  
 Lena, Good Shepherd  
 Milledgeville, Trinity  
 Mt. Carroll, First  
 Pearl City, St. John's  
 Pecatonica, First  
 Scales Mound, Shepherd of the Hills  
 Stockton, Christ  
 Warren, St. Paul's

#### Southwest Conference

Aledo, Messiah  
 Galesburg, First  
 Henderson Grove, Messiah  
 Galesburg, Trinity  
 Galva, Messiah  
 Kewanee, Redeemer  
 Kewanee, Zion

Knoxville, Grace  
 Lynn Center, Swedona  
 Monmouth, First  
 New Windsor, Calvary  
 North Henderson, Zion  
 Ophim, Grace  
 Sherrard, First  
 Stronghurst, Bethel  
 Wataga, Faith  
 Woodhull, Bethany

Leland, Bethany  
 Marseilles, Immanuel  
 McNabb, Emmaus  
 Mendota, St. John's  
 Ohio, First  
 Ottawa, Trinity  
 Peru, Immanuel  
 Peru, St. John's  
 Princeton, St. John  
 Princeton, St. Matthew  
 Seneca, Our Savior's  
 Somonauk, St. John's  
 Streator, St. Paul's  
 Tonica, St. Paul's

#### West Conference

Andover, Augustana  
 Cambridge, Cambridge  
 East Moline, Immanuel  
 Geneseo, First  
 Moline, Calvary  
 Moline, First  
 Moline, Salem  
 San Jose Obrero, Moline  
 Moline, Trinity  
 Orion, St. Paul  
 Port Byron, Messiah  
 Port Byron, Peace  
 Rock Island, First  
 Rock Island, St. James  
 Rock Island, St. John's

**S12.02.** The synod shall establish and make provision for the continued functioning of conferences composed of congregations and rostered ministers, in specified geographical areas. The boundaries of the conferences as found in the bylaws, shall be subject to redetermination by the synod in consultation with the conferences and/or congregations in question at four (4) year intervals.

**S12.02.01.** The function of each conference may be to:

- Provide opportunity for congregations and rostered ministers to:
  - study the Holy Scriptures and Christian Doctrine.

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 As amended to comply with Model Constitution for Synods: August 2019,  
 As amended by Synod Council Action: September 2019, January 2021

**Commented [PE71]:** Amended to comply with ELCA synod model constitution

2. quicken and deepen spiritual and worship life.
3. cultivate Christian fellowship.
- b. Promote and support communication among the various expressions and ministries of the church in this synod.
- c. Provide educational workshops.
- d. Promote joint efforts in nurture and service through clusters coalitions and strategies which advance the mission of the church in this conference.
- e. Nominate one voting member and one alternate from each conference to the Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA in accordance with the guidelines provided by the Synod Council.
- f. Fulfill functions as required in S11.01. ~~CA89.~~

**S12.03.** Each Conference shall have a Conference Dean appointed by the bishop and approved by the Synod Council. The term of office shall be three (3) years and the Dean may serve up to two (2) consecutive terms. Conference Deans shall be on the roster of this synod and may be under call in the conference to which they are appointed. Conference Deans may be authorized to exercise the following duties:

- a. provide for the pastoral care of rostered ministers within the conference
- b. serve as the convener of conference meetings
- c. facilitate conference collegiality and leadership development
- d. facilitate conference communication and serve as synod liaison
- e. facilitate nominations for elections to synod committees
- f. participate in meetings of conference deans
- g. conduct exit interviews with rostered leaders and congregation councils
- h. offer the office of bishop recommendations for interim ministry in conference congregations
- i. assist in identifying supply pastors to the office of bishop
- j. participate in the installations of rostered ministers in conference congregations
- k. foster collaborative and cooperative ministries among conference congregations
- l. present mobility papers of recommended rostered ministers from the office of bishop to call committees

**S12.04.** Each conference shall elect a Dean and may elect a Secretary/Treasurer for a term of three (3) years.

**S12.05.** A conference may adopt for itself such guidelines for its functioning not in conflict with the constitution and bylaws of this synod or this church.

**S12.06.** The dean of each conference shall annually make a written report to the bishop of the synod including an abstract of the proceedings of the conference stating also the condition and needs of the church within its bounds.

## Chapter 13.

### CONGREGATIONS

†**S13.01.** Each congregation, except those certified as congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America by the uniting churches, prior to being listed in the roster of congregations of this synod, shall adopt the *Model Constitution for Congregations* or one acceptable to this synod that is not in contradiction to the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

- a. **New congregations.** A congregation newly formed by this church and any congregation seeking recognition and reception by this church shall:
  - 1) Accept the criteria for recognition and reception as a congregation of this church, fulfill the functions of the congregation, and accept the governance provisions as provided in Chapter 9 of the constitution and bylaws of this church.
  - 2) Adopt governing documents that include fully and without alterations the Preamble, Chapter 1, where applicable, and all required provisions of Chapters 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 15, 16, 17, 18, and 19 in the *Model Constitution for Congregations* consistent with requirements of the constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of this church. Bylaws and continuing resolutions, appropriate for inclusion in these chapters and not in conflict with these required provisions in the *Model Constitution for Congregations*, the constitution of this synod, or the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, may be adopted as described in Chapters 16 and 18 of the *Model Constitution for Congregations*.
  - 3) Accept the commitments expected of all congregations of this church as stated in \*C6.01., \*C6.02., and \*C6.03. of the *Model Constitution for Congregations*.
- b. **Congregations from another church body.** If a congregation is a member of another church body, the leadership of the congregation first should consult with the appropriate authorities of that church body before taking action to leave its current church body. After such consultation, leaders of the congregation should contact the ELCA synod bishop or staff where the congregation is located. The synod bishop or synod staff where the transferring

**Commented [PE72]:** Citation correction

**Commented [PE73]:** Conference Deans revision

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or independent congregation is located shall confer with the congregation to assure its understanding and acceptance of commitment to and affiliation with this church.

- c. **Recognition and reception.** Recognition and reception into this church of transferring or independent congregations by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is based on the judgment of the synod and action by the synod through the Synod Council and Synod Assembly. The synod bishop shall provide for prompt reporting of such additions to the secretary of this church for addition to the roster of congregations.

†S13.02. It shall be the responsibility of each congregation of this synod to choose from among its voting members laypersons to serve as members of the Synod Assembly as well as persons to represent it at meetings of any conference, cluster, coalition, or other area subdivision of which it is a member. The number of persons to be elected by each congregation and other qualifications shall be as prescribed in guidelines established by this synod.

S13.11. When a rostered minister resigns, the Congregation Council shall receive the letter of resignation, report it to the congregation, and at once notify the bishop of this synod.

S13.12. A congregation under financial obligation to its former rostered minister shall make satisfactory settlement of the obligation before calling a successor.

†S13.20. A congregation considering a relocation shall confer with the bishop of the synod in which it is territorially located and the appropriate unit of the churchwide organization before any steps are taken leading to such action. The approval of the Synod Council shall be received before any such action is effected.

†S13.21. A congregation considering development of an additional site to be used regularly for worship shall confer with the bishop of the synod in which it is territorially located and the appropriate unit of the churchwide organization before any steps are taken leading to such action.

†S13.22. Each congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America within the territory of this synod, except those which are in partnership with the Slovak Zion Synod, shall establish and maintain a relationship with this synod.

†S13.23. Provision 9.71. of the constitution of this church shall govern the relationship of this synod and a congregation of this synod regarding the property of the congregation. This synod may transfer or convey property to a congregation of the synod, subject to restrictions accepted by the congregation, including provision that if the Synod Council, in its sole and exclusive discretion, determines (1) that the property is not being used to serve the mission and ministry needs of this church, or (2) that the congregation has transferred, encumbered, mortgaged, or in any way burdened or impaired any right, title, or interest in the property without the prior approval of the Synod Council, then title to the property shall revert to the synod, and the congregation, upon written demand, shall reconvey the property to the synod.

†S13.24. The Synod Council, itself or through trustees appointed by it, may take charge and control of the property of a congregation of this synod to hold, manage, and convey the same on behalf of this synod, if any of the following apply:

- The congregation has disbanded, ceased to worship, or otherwise ceased to exist as a congregation.
- The congregation has abandoned its property.
- The remaining members of the congregation decide that it is no longer possible to function as a congregation or that they are unable to provide required governance.
- The Synod Council determines that the membership of a congregation has become so scattered or so diminished in numbers that it cannot provide required governance or that it has become impractical for the congregation to fulfill the purposes for which it was organized.
- The Synod Council determines that it is necessary for this synod to protect and preserve the congregation's property from waste and deterioration.

The congregation shall have the right to appeal any such decision to the next Synod Assembly.

S13.25. This synod may temporarily assume administration of a congregation upon its request or with its concurrence. Such synod administration shall continue only so long as necessary to complete the purposes for which it was requested by the congregation or until the congregation withdraws consent to continued administration.

#### S13.30. Discipline

†S13.31. Congregations and members of congregations are subject to discipline in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 20 of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*. The synod's involvement in and responsibility for such disciplinary processes shall be as set forth in that chapter.

**S13.40.** Synodically-authorized Worshipping Communities

**Commented [PE75]:** Recommended amendments ELCA synod model constitution

**Commented [PE76]:** Recommended amendments ELCA synod model constitution

- S13.41.** Authorized worshiping communities, acknowledged under criteria, policies, and procedures approved by the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, shall accept and adhere to the Confession of Faith and Statement of Purpose of this church, shall be served by leadership under the criteria of this church, and shall be subject to the discipline of this church.

#### Chapter 14.

#### ROSTERED MINISTERS

##### †S14.10. Ministers of Word and Sacrament

- †S14.11. The time and place of the ordination of those persons properly called to ministry in this synod shall be authorized by the bishop of this synod.

- †S14.12. Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,
- Every minister of Word and Sacrament shall:
    - 1) preach the Word;
    - 2) administer the sacraments;
    - 3) conduct public worship;
    - 4) provide pastoral care;
    - 5) seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel;
    - 6) impart knowledge of this church and its wider ministry through available channels of effective communication;
    - 7) witness to the Kingdom of God in the community, in the nation and abroad; and
    - 8) speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, calling for justice and proclaiming God's love for the world.
  - Each pastor with a congregational call shall, within the congregation:
    - 1) offer instruction, confirm, marry, visit the sick and distressed, and bury the dead;
    - 2) relate to all schools and organizations of the congregation;
    - 3) install regularly elected members of the Congregation Council;
    - 4) with the council, administer discipline;
    - 5) endeavor to increase the support given by the congregation to the work of the churchwide organization and of this synod; and
    - 6) encourage adherence to covenantal relationship with this church as expressed in the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*.

- S14.13.** The pastor (a) shall keep accurate parochial records of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials deaths, communicants, members received, members dismissed, or members excluded from the congregation, (b) shall submit a summary of such statistics annually to this synod, and (c) shall become a member of the congregation upon receipt and acceptance of the letter of call. In a parish of multiple congregations, the pastor shall hold membership in one of the congregations.

- S14.14.** Whenever members of a congregation move to such a distance that regular attendance at its services becomes impractical, it shall be the duty of the pastor to commend them, upon their consent, to the pastoral care of a congregation nearer to their place of residence.

- S14.15.** Each minister of Word and Sacrament on the roster of this synod shall submit a report of his or her ministry to the bishop of the synod at least 90 days prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.

- †S14.16. When a congregation of this church desires to call a pastor or a candidate for the ministry of Word and Sacrament of this church:
- Each congregation of this synod shall consult the bishop of this synod before taking any steps leading to the extending of a call to a prospective pastor.
  - For issuance of a letter of call to a pastor or candidate by a congregation of this synod in accord with ELCA constitutional provision 7.41., a two-thirds vote shall be required of voting members of the congregation present and voting at a meeting regularly called for the purpose of issuing such a call.
  - When the congregation has voted to issue a call to a prospective pastor, the letter of call shall be submitted to the bishop of this synod for the bishop's signature.

- S14.17.** No minister of Word and Sacrament shall accept a call without first conferring with the bishop of this synod. A minister of Word and Sacrament shall respond with an answer of acceptance or declination to a letter of call within 30 days of receipt of such call. In exceptional circumstances, with the approval of the bishop of this synod and the president of the Congregation Council of the congregation issuing the call, an additional 15 days may be granted to respond to a letter of call.

**Commented [PE77]:** Amended for clarity

**Commented [PE78]:** Recommended amendments ELCA synod model constitution

**Commented [PE79]:** Recommended amendments ELCA synod model constitution

†S14.18. The provisions for termination of the mutual relationship between a minister of Word and Sacrament and a congregation shall be as follows:

- a. The call of a congregation, when accepted by a pastor, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment which shall be terminated only by the pastor's death or, following consultation with the synod bishop, for the following reasons:
  - 1) mutual agreement 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, no later than 30 days after the date on which it was submitted;
  - 3) inability to conduct the pastoral office effectively in that congregation in view of local conditions;
  - 4) physical disability or mental incapacity of the pastor;
  - 5) suspension of the pastor through discipline for more than three months;
  - 6) resignation or removal of the pastor from the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church;
  - 7) termination of the relationship between this church and the congregation;
  - 8) dissolution of the congregation or the termination of a parish arrangement; or
  - 9) suspension of the congregation through discipline for more than six months.
- b. When allegations of physical disability or mental incapacity of the pastor under paragraph a.4) above, or ineffective conduct of the pastoral office under paragraph a.3) above, have come to the attention of the bishop of this synod,
  - 1) the bishop in his or her sole discretion may investigate such conditions personally together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson, or
  - 2) when such allegations have been brought to the synod's attention by an official recital of allegations by the Congregation Council or by a petition signed by at least one-third of the voting members of the congregation, the bishop personally shall investigate such conditions together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson.
- c. In case of alleged physical disability or mental incapacity under paragraph a.4) above, the bishop's committee shall obtain and document competent medical opinion concerning the pastor's condition. When a disability or incapacity is evident to the committee, the bishop of this synod may declare the pastorate vacant. When the pastorate is declared vacant, the Synod Council shall list the pastor on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament with disability status. Upon removal of the disability and restoration of the pastor to health, the bishop shall take steps to enable the pastor to resume the ministry, either in the congregation last served or in another appropriate call.
- d. In the case of alleged local difficulties that imperil the effective functioning of the congregation under paragraph a.3) above, the bishop's committee shall endeavor to hear from all concerned persons, after which the bishop together with the committee shall present their recommendations first to the pastor and then to the congregation. The recommendations of the bishop's committee must address whether the pastor's call should come to an end and, if so, may suggest appropriate severance arrangements. The committee may also propose other actions that should be undertaken by the congregation and by the pastor, if appropriate. If the pastor and congregation agree to carry out such recommendations, no further action need be taken by the synod.
- e. If either party fails to assent to the recommendations of the bishop's committee concerning the pastor's call, the congregation may dismiss the pastor only at a legally called meeting after consultation with the bishop, either (a) by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee did not recommend termination of the call, or (b) by a majority vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee recommended termination of the call.
- f. If, in the course of proceedings described in paragraph c. or paragraph d. above, the bishop's committee concludes that there may be grounds for disciplinary action, the committee shall make recommendations concerning disciplinary action in accordance with the provisions of this church's constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.

†S14.19. Ministers of Word and Sacrament shall respect the integrity of the ministry of congregations which they do not serve and shall not exercise ministerial functions therein unless invited to do so by the pastor, or if there is no duly called pastor, then by the interim pastor in consultation with the Congregation Council.

†S14.21. The parochial records of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, communicants, members received, members transferred or dismissed, members who have become inactive, or members excluded from the congregation shall be kept accurately and permanently. They shall remain the property of each congregation. At the time of the closure of

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As amended by Synod Council Action: September 2019, January 2021

a congregation, such records shall be sent to the regional archives. The secretary of the congregation shall attest to the bishop of this synod that such records have been placed in his or her hands in good order by a departing pastor before:

- a. installation in another call, or
- b. approval of a request for change in roster status.

†S14.22. The pastor shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to a former congregation before:

- a. installation in another call, or
- b. approval of a request for change in roster status.

†S14.23. During service to a congregation, an interim pastor shall have the rights and duties in the congregation of a regularly called pastor. The interim pastor may delegate the same in part to an interim supply pastor with the consent of the bishop of this synod. The interim pastor and any rostered minister who may assist shall refrain from exerting influence in the selection of a pastor. Upon completion of service, the interim pastor shall certify to the bishop of this synod that the parochial records, for the period for which the interim pastor was responsible, are in order.

†S14.24. With the approval of the synod bishop expressed in writing, which sets forth a clear statement of the purpose to be served by such a departure from the normal rule of permanency of the call as expressed in †S14.18., a congregation may call a pastor for a specific term. Details of such calls shall be in writing setting forth the purpose and conditions involved. Prior to the completion of a term, the bishop of this synod or a representative of the bishop shall meet with the pastor and representatives of the congregation for a review of the call. Such call may also be terminated before its expiration in accordance with the provisions of †S14.18.

S14.25. All ministers of Word and Sacrament under a call shall attend meetings of the Synod Assembly, and the pastors of congregations shall also attend the meetings of the conference, cluster, coalition, or other area subdivision to which the congregation belongs.

†S14.30. **Ministers of Word and Service**

†S14.31. The time and place of the ordination of those persons properly called to ministry in this synod shall be authorized by the bishop of this synod.

†S14.32. Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, every Minister of Word and Service shall:

- a. Be rooted in the Word of God, for proclamation and service;
- b. Advocate a prophetic diakonia that commits itself to risk-taking and innovative service on the frontiers of the Church's outreach, giving particular attention to the suffering places in God's world;
- c. Speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, calling for justice and proclaiming God's love for the world, witnessing to the realm of God in the community, the nation, and abroad;
- d. Equip the baptized for ministry in God's world that affirms the gifts of all people;
- e. Encourage mutual relationships that invite participation and accompaniment of others in God's mission;
- f. Practice stewardship that respects God's gift of time, talents, and resources;
- g. Be grounded in a gathered community for ongoing diaconal formation;
- h. Share knowledge of this church and its wider ministry of the gospel, and advocate for the work of all expressions of this church; and
- i. Identify and encourage qualified persons to prepare for ministry of the gospel.

S14.33. The minister of Word and Service shall become a member of the congregation upon receipt and acceptance of the letter of call. In a parish of multiple congregations, the minister of Word and Service shall hold membership in one of the congregations.

S14.34. Each minister of Word and Service on the roster of this synod shall submit a report of his or her ministry to the bishop of the synod at least 90 days prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.

†S14.41. When a congregation of this church desires to call a minister of Word and Service or a candidate for the ministry of Word and Service of this church:

- a. Each congregation of this synod shall consult the bishop of this synod before taking any steps leading to the extending of a call to a prospective minister of Word and Service.
- b. For issuance of a letter of call to a minister of Word and Service or candidate by a congregation of this synod in accord with ELCA constitutional provision 7.71., a two-thirds vote shall be required of members of the congregation present and voting at a meeting regularly called for the purpose of issuing such a call.
- c. When the congregation has voted to issue a call to a prospective minister of Word and Service, the letter of call shall be submitted to the bishop of this synod for the bishop's signature.

S14.42. No Minister of Word and Service shall accept a call without first conferring with the bishop of this synod. A minister of Word and Service shall respond with an answer of acceptance or declination to a letter of call within 30 days of

receipt of such call. In exceptional circumstances, with the approval of the bishop of this synod and the president of the Congregation Council of the congregation issuing the call, an additional 15 days may be granted to respond to a letter of call.

†S14.43.

The provisions for termination of the mutual relationship between a minister of Word and Service and a congregation shall be as follows:

- a. The call of a congregation, when accepted by a minister of Word and Service, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment which shall be terminated only by the deacon's death or, following consultation with the synod bishop, for the following reasons:
  - 1) mutual agreement to terminate the call or the completion of a call for a specific term;
  - 2) resignation of the minister of Word and Service, which shall become effective, unless otherwise agreed, no later than 30 days after the date on which it was submitted;
  - 3) inability to conduct the office effectively in that congregation in view of local conditions;
  - 4) physical disability or mental incapacity of the minister of Word and Service;
  - 5) suspension of the minister of Word and Service through discipline for more than three months;
  - 6) resignation or removal of the minister of Word and Service from the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of this church;
  - 7) termination of the relationship between this church and the congregation;
  - 8) dissolution of the congregation or the termination of a parish arrangement; or
  - 9) suspension of the congregation through discipline for more than six months.
- b. When allegations of physical disability or mental incapacity of the minister of Word and Service under paragraph a.4) above, or ineffective conduct of the ministry of Word and Service under paragraph a.3) above, have come to the attention of the bishop of this synod,
  - 1) the bishop in his or her sole discretion may investigate such conditions personally together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson, or
  - 2) when such allegations have been brought to the synod's attention by an official recital of allegations by the Congregation Council or by a petition signed by at least one-third of the voting members of the congregation, the bishop personally shall investigate such conditions together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson.
- c. In case of alleged physical disability or mental incapacity under paragraph a.4) above, the bishop's committee shall obtain and document competent medical opinion concerning the minister of Word and Service's condition. When a disability or incapacity is evident to the committee, the bishop of this synod may declare the position vacant. When the position is declared vacant, the Synod Council shall list the deacon on the roster of Ministers of Word and Service with disability status. Upon removal of the disability and restoration of the minister of Word and Service to health, the bishop shall take steps to enable the minister of Word and Service to resume the ministry, either in the congregation last served or in another appropriate call.
- d. In the case of alleged local difficulties that imperil the effective functioning of the congregation under paragraph a.3) above, the bishop's committee shall endeavor to hear from all concerned persons, after which the bishop together with the committee shall present their recommendations first to the minister of Word and Service and then to the congregation. The recommendations of the bishop's committee address whether the minister of Word and Service's call should come to an end and, if so, may suggest appropriate severance arrangements. The committee may also propose other actions that should be undertaken by the congregation and by the minister of Word and Service, if appropriate. If the minister of Word and Service and congregation agree to carry out such recommendations, no further action need be taken by the synod.
- e. If either party fails to assent to the recommendations of the bishop's committee concerning the minister of Word and Service's call, the congregation may dismiss the minister of Word and Service only at a legally called meeting after consultation with the bishop, either (a) by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee did not recommend termination of the call, or (b) by a majority vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee recommended termination of the call.
- f. If, in the course of proceedings described in paragraph c. or paragraph d. above, the bishop's committee concludes that there may be grounds for disciplinary action, the committee shall make recommendations concerning disciplinary action in accordance with the provisions of this church's constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.

**Commented [PE80]:** Recommended amendments ELCA synod model constitution

- †S14.44. Ministers of Word and Service shall respect the integrity of the ministry of congregations which they do not serve and shall not exercise ministerial functions therein unless invited to do so by the Congregation Council.
- †S14.45. The minister of Word and Service shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to a former congregation before:
- installation in another call, or
  - approval of a request for change in roster status.
- †S14.46. With the approval of the synod bishop expressed in writing, which sets forth a clear statement of the purpose to be served by such a departure from the normal rule of permanency of the call as expressed in †S14.43., a congregation may call a minister of Word and Service for a specific term. Details of such calls shall be in writing setting forth the purpose and conditions involved. Prior to the completion of a term, the bishop of this synod or a representative of the bishop shall meet with the minister of Word and Service and representatives of the congregation for a review of the call. Such call may also be terminated before its expiration in accordance with the provisions of †S14.43.
- S14.47. All ministers of Word and Service under a call shall attend meetings of the Synod Assembly, and the ministers of Word and Service of congregations shall also attend the meetings of the conference, cluster, coalition, or other area subdivision to which the congregation belongs.

## Chapter 15. FINANCIAL MATTERS

- †S15.01. The fiscal year of this synod shall be February 1 through January 31.
- †S15.11. Since the congregations, synods, and churchwide organization are interdependent expressions that share in God's mission, all share in the responsibility to develop, implement, and strengthen the financial support of the whole church. The gifts and offerings of the members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America are given to support all parts of this church, the unity of this church should be evidenced in determining each part's share of the gifts and offerings. Therefore:
- The mission of this church beyond the congregation is to be supported by such a proportionate share of each congregation's annual budget as each congregation determines. This synod shall develop guidelines for determining "proportionate share," and shall consult with congregational leaders to assist each congregation in making its determination.
  - This synod shall receive the proportionate share of the mission support from its congregations, and shall transmit that percentage or amount of each congregation's mission support as determined in consultation with the churchwide organization and approved by the Synod Assembly as part of its budget consideration.
  - Should the Synod Assembly not approve the proportionate share of mission support determined in consultation with the churchwide organization, a new consultation with the churchwide organization shall take place. The Synod Council is authorized to amend the budget adopted by the Synod Assembly to reflect the results of this consultation.
- †S15.12. The annual budget of this synod shall reflect the entire range of its own activities and its commitment to supportive funding with other synods and the churchwide organization.
- S15.13. On the basis of estimated income, the Synod Council shall authorize expenditures within the budget for the fiscal year. Expenditure authorizations shall be subject to revision, in light of changing conditions, by the Synod Council.
- S15.14. Except when such procedure would jeopardize current operations, a reserve amounting to no more than 16 percent of the sum of the amounts scheduled in the next year's budget for regular distribution to synod causes shall be carried forward annually for disbursement in the following year in the interest of making possible a more even flow of income to such causes. The exact number of dollars to be held in reserve shall be determined by the Synod Council.
- S15.21. No appeal to congregations of this or any other synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for the raising of funds shall be conducted by congregations or organizations related to or affiliated with this synod without the consent of the Synod Assembly or the Synod Council.
- †S15.31. This synod shall arrange to have an annual audit of its financial records conducted by a certified public accountant firm recommended by the synod Audit Committee and approved by the Synod Council. The audited annual financial report shall be submitted by this synod to the churchwide Office of the Treasurer and to the congregations of this synod. The financial reports shall be in the format approved from time to time by the churchwide Office of the Treasurer.
- †S15.32. This synod shall maintain adequate, continuous insurance coverage in accordance with standards recommended by the churchwide organization. Insurance programs offered or endorsed by the churchwide organization shall be deemed to fulfill this obligation.

**Commented [PE81]:** Recommended amendments ELCA synod model constitution



## Chapter 16. INDEMNIFICATION

- †S16.01. Subject to the limitations and duties imposed by law, each person who is or was made or threatened to be made a party to any proceeding by reason of the present or former capacity of that person as a Synod Council member, officer, employee, or committee member of this synod shall be indemnified against all costs and expenses incurred by that person in connection with the proceeding. Indemnification of any person by reason of that person's capacity as a director, officer, employee, or committee member of any other organization, regardless of its form or relationship to this synod, is subject to the provisions of section †S16.02.
- a. The term "proceeding" means a threatened, pending, or completed lawsuit, whether civil or criminal, an administrative or investigative matter, arbitration, mediation, alternative dispute resolution, or any other similar legal or governmental action. Except as otherwise required by law, the term "proceeding" does not include (a) any action by this synod against the individual seeking indemnification, or (b) subject to †S16.04., a disciplinary hearing or related process described in Chapter 20 of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*.
- b. The term "indemnification" includes reimbursement and advances of costs and expenses for judgments, penalties, fines, settlements, excise taxes, reasonable attorneys' fees, disbursements, and similar required expenditures.
- †S16.02. Whenever a person who, while a Synod Council member, officer, committee member, or employee of this synod, is or was serving at the request of this synod as (or whose duties in that position involve or involved service in the capacity of) a director, officer, partner, trustee, employee, or agent of another organization, is or was made or threatened to be made a party to a proceeding by reason of such capacity, then such person shall be entitled to indemnification only if (a) the Synod Council has established a process for determining whether a person serving in the capacity described in this section shall be entitled to indemnification in any specific case, and (b) that process has been applied in making a specific determination that such person is entitled to indemnification.
- S16.02.A95. Process for Determining Persons Entitled To Indemnification Under Northern Illinois Constitution †16.03.
- a. One of the principal purposes of separate incorporation is that each organization should be responsible for its own affairs and liabilities and the conduct of its own directors, officers, and other persons whom the organization entrusted with responsibility.
- b. However, there are occasions when the interest of the Northern Illinois Synod, ELCA, are of sufficient importance that it will agree to indemnify a person who while serving as a Synod Council member officer, employee, or committee member of the Northern Illinois Synod, ELCA, is requested by the Northern Illinois Synod, ELCA, to serve in some capacity for another organization.
- c. Any person who desires the benefit of indemnification under+16.03. shall make written application setting forth the name of the other organization, whether or not this other organization that the applicant holds or will hold, a brief statement as to why the applicant's holding of this position in the other organization is in the interests of the Northern Illinois Synod, ELCA, and a statement that no claim has been asserted against the applicant that would or might entitle the applicant to indemnification under the indemnification right being requested.
- d. The application must be signed by the applicant and must be endorsed by either the Bishop or the Executive Committee.
- e. The applicant may be requested to supply additional information such as the other organization's policy on indemnification, information on the other organization's insurance coverage and financial responsibility, and a description of the responsibilities that the applicant has with relation to the other organization.
- f. The application and any requested additional information should be submitted to and will first be reviewed by the Bishop.
- g. The Bishop shall recommend to the Executive Committee whether the application should be approved. The Executive Committee will decide on behalf of the Synod Council. The action of the Executive Committee will be recorded in its minutes. The applicant will be notified of the Executive Committee's decision.
- h. No member of the Executive Committee shall participate in decisions as to which such member is an applicant
- i. Approval may be granted on a limited basis, examples of which include but are not limited to the approval may cover the applicant's service as a director but not as an officer of the other organization; the approval may be limited in period of time; the approval may cover civil but not criminal liabilities; the approval may be conditional upon the applicant first seeking indemnification or reimbursement from the other organization or its insurance

- carrier. Unless otherwise specifically provided by the Executive Committee of the synod Council approval will not entitle any person to indemnification with respect to a claim asserted against her/him prior to such approval.
- j. If the other organization is not a corporation, indemnification under †S16.03. shall be provided only in exceptional cases.

†S16.03. This synod may purchase and maintain insurance on behalf of itself or any person entitled to indemnification pursuant to this chapter against any liability asserted against and incurred by this synod or by such other person in or arising from a capacity described in section †S16.01. or section †S16.02.

†S16.04. When written charges against a rostered minister of this church are made in disciplinary proceedings under Chapter 20 of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* by the synod bishop or when written charges against a congregation are made in disciplinary proceedings by the Synod Council or the synod bishop, and the discipline hearing committee determines that no discipline shall be imposed, then if such determination is not reversed or set aside on appeal, indemnification shall be made by the synod to the accused for reasonable attorney's fees and other reasonable expenses related to the defense of the charges. The determination of the reasonableness of such fees and expenses shall be decided by the Synod Council.

## **Chapter 17.**

### **CONSULTATION AND ADJUDICATION**

†S17.01. The synod bishop and the Executive Committee of the Synod Council shall be available to give counsel when disputes arise within this synod.

†S17.02. The synod bishop and the Executive Committee of the Synod Council shall receive expressions of concern from rostered ministers of this church, congregations, and organizations within this synod; provide a forum in which the parties concerned can seek to work out matters causing distress or conflict; and make appropriate recommendations for their resolution. When a concern relates directly to the synod bishop, the synod vice president will lead the Executive Committee's efforts at resolving the matter. When the matter at issue cannot be resolved in this manner, applicable procedures for investigation, decision, appeal, and adjudication shall be followed. Allegations or charges that could lead to the discipline of a rostered minister of this church shall not be addressed by the Executive Committee but shall be resolved through the disciplinary process set forth in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*.

†S17.03. When there is disagreement between or among congregations of this synod on a substantive issue that cannot be resolved by the parties, the council of an affected congregation may petition the synod bishop for a consultation after informing the other affected congregation(s) of its intent to do so. If this consultation fails to resolve the issue, the bishop shall refer the matter to the Consultation Committee of the synod, which shall undertake efforts to find an appropriate solution. If the Consultation Committee's efforts fail to resolve the issue(s), the entire matter shall be referred to the Synod Council for adjudication by whatever process the council deems necessary. The decision of the Synod Council shall be final.

†S17.04. When conferences, clusters, coalitions, or area subdivisions of this synod have a disagreement on a substantive issue that they cannot resolve, the aggrieved party or parties may petition the synod bishop and the Executive Committee of the Synod Council requesting a consultation after informing the other affected parties of their intent to do so. In this case the decision of the Executive Committee shall prevail, except that, upon the motion of a member of the Synod Council, the decision shall be referred to the Synod Council for final action.

#### **†S17.10. Adjudication in a Congregation**

†S17.11. When there is disagreement between or among factions within a congregation on a substantive issue which cannot be resolved by the parties, members of the congregation may petition the synod bishop for consultation after informing the president of the Congregation Council of their intent to do so. The synod bishop shall seek a timely resolution of the dispute. If the issue relates directly to the pastor, the bishop may begin the process in †S14.18.d. In all other matters, if the bishop's consultation fails to resolve the issue, the bishop shall refer the matter to the Consultation Committee of the synod, which shall undertake efforts to find an appropriate solution. If the Consultation Committee's efforts fail to resolve the dispute, the entire matter shall be referred to the Synod Council for adjudication by whatever process the council deems necessary. The Synod Council's decision shall be final.

## **Chapter 18.**

### **AMENDMENTS, BYLAWS, AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS**

#### **†S18.10. Amendments to Constitution**

- †S18.11. Certain sections of this constitution incorporate and record therein required provisions of the constitution and bylaws of this church. If such provisions are amended by the Churchwide Assembly, corresponding amendments shall be introduced at once into this constitution by the secretary of this synod upon receipt of formal certification thereof from the secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- †S18.12. Whenever the secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America officially informs this synod that the Churchwide Assembly has amended the *Constitution for Synods*, this constitution may be amended to reflect any such amendment by a majority vote at any subsequent meeting of the Synod Assembly without presentation at a prior Synod Assembly. An amendment that is identical to a provision of the *Constitution for Synods* shall be deemed to have been ratified upon its adoption by this synod. The Church Council, through the secretary of this church, shall be given prompt notification of its adoption.
- †S18.13. Other amendments to this constitution may be adopted by this synod through either of the following procedures:
- Introduced with the support of at least ten voting members and having been approved by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting at a regular meeting of the Synod Assembly, an amendment may be adopted unchanged by a two-thirds vote at the next regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.
  - The Synod Council may propose an amendment, with notice to be sent to the congregations of this synod at least six months prior to the next regular meeting of the Synod Assembly. Such an amendment shall require for adoption a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting at such a regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.
- All such amendments shall become effective upon ratification by the Churchwide Assembly or by the Church Council.
- †S18.20. **Amendments to Bylaws**
- †S18.21. This synod may adopt bylaws not in conflict with this constitution or with the constitution and bylaws of the churchwide organization. This synod may amend its bylaws at any meeting of the Synod Assembly by a two-thirds vote of voting members of the assembly present and voting. Newly adopted bylaws and amendments to existing bylaws shall be reported to the secretary of this church.
- †S18.30. **Amendments to Continuing Resolutions**
- †S18.31. This synod may adopt continuing resolutions not in conflict with this constitution or its bylaws or the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of the churchwide organization. Such continuing resolutions may be adopted or amended by a majority vote of the Synod Assembly or by a two-thirds vote of Synod Council. Newly adopted continuing resolutions and amendments to existing continuing resolutions shall be reported to the secretary of this church.