
La Crosse Area Synod

Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



**Constitution of the
La Crosse Area Synod, ELCA**

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CONSTITUTION OF THE LA CROSSE AREA SYNOD, ELCA

(† = Required Provisions)

Code Explanation

The provisions of the Constitution, the Bylaws, and the Continuing Resolutions that pertain to the same matter have been placed together. This arrangement requires that the three types of material be identified by means other than physical separation.

The three types of provision are identified by the following devices:

- a. **All constitutional provisions are in bold face type.**
- b. All bylaw provisions are printed in light face type.
- c. *All continuing resolutions are printed in italic type.*
- d. A numerical codification also indicates general subject, constitutional provisions, bylaws provisions, and continuing resolutions.

In this document, references to the Constitution of the ELCA are listed by number and are not prefaced by a letter (provisions in this Synod constitution are prefaced by an "S"; those in the Model Constitution for Congregations with "C").

Chapter 1.

NAME AND INCORPORATION

- †S1.01. The name of this synod, as determined by the Churchwide Assembly, shall be the La Crosse Area Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- †S1.02. For the purposes of this constitution and the accompanying bylaws, the La Crosse Area 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: The top third reads, "LA CROSSE AREA SYNOD." The bottom two-thirds reads, "EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA." Four background shapes with a graduated shading from dark to light represent the four conferences of this synod. The narrow spaces between the "conference shapes" are a reminder of the many rivers which crisscross this synod. A large white cross overlays the "conference shapes." The outer shape of the arms of this cross form a "U" shape representing the coulees of this synod's area. A bold black cross at the center is a witness to our faith in the crucified and risen Christ as the center and focus of all that this synod is and does as a synod the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

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 Adams, Buffalo (south), Crawford, Jackson (south), Juneau, La Crosse, Monroe, Trempealeau (south), Vernon in the state of WISCONSIN, and congregations in or near the city/towns of La Crescent, Caledonia, and Spring Grove in the state of MINNESOTA.
- †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 10.02.02.

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.
- †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. Each synod, in partnership 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. In providing for pastoral care of congregations and rostered ministers in the synod, 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-synodical 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-synodical committees;
 - 4) authorizing consecrations and consecrating 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 partnership 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 partnership funding;
 - d. supporting relationships with and providing partnership funding on behalf of colleges, universities, and campus ministries;
 - e. maintaining relationships with and providing partnership 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 partners;
 - 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, as nearly as possible, 50 percent of the lay members of assemblies, councils, committees, boards, or other organizational units shall be female and 50 percent shall be male; and that, where possible, the representation of ordained ministers shall be both male and female. 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.
- †S6.05. Each assembly, council, committee, board, commission, task force, or other body of this synod or any synodical 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 La Crosse Area Synod Assembly shall be determined by the Synod Council. The time and place for the next regular assembly normally shall be announced 12 months prior to the assembly.
- S7.11.01.A01. *In the event that neither the bishop nor the synod vice president is able to preside at Synod Assembly, the vice chair of Synod Council shall preside at Synod Assembly.*
- S7.11.02 The regular gathering of the Synod Assembly shall include in its program a service of worship with Holy Communion.
- S7.11.03 The Synod Council shall appoint such convention committees as are required for the orderly planning and the proper conduct of the assembly business, including committees on Arrangements, Credentials, Reference and Counsel, and others as required.
- S7.11.03.A01. *All resolutions that are to be printed in the pre-assembly program shall be submitted to the Resolutions Committee by February 15 in order to handle all resolutions in a timely manner. Resolutions should be submitted as early as possible, but no resolutions shall be received by the committee after 12 noon on the first day of the Assembly without a 2/3 vote of the assembly.*
- 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.
 - 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.
a. Seating for voting members at Synod Assembly will be assigned. Voting members will generally be seated by congregation.
- †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:
a. All ministers of Word and Sacrament under call on the roster of this synod in attendance at this Synod Assembly shall be voting members.
b. All ministers of Word and Service, under call, on the official lay rosters of this synod shall be voting members in the Synod Assembly, in addition to the voting membership of lay members of congregations provided in item †S7.21.c.
c. 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, normally one of whom shall be male and one of whom shall be female, 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, as nearly as possible, 50 percent of the lay members of the assembly shall be female and 50 percent shall be male. Additional members from each congregation normally shall be equally divided between male and female.
d. Voting membership shall include the officers of this synod.
- S7.21.A01. The formula established by the Synod Council for additional voting members to Synod Assemblies is: In addition to the two voting members from each congregation, each congregation with membership in excess of 500 baptized members shall be represented by one voting member for each fraction of 500 members in addition to 500. (501-1,000 allows a third voting member, 1,001 to 1,500 gives a congregation a fourth voting member, etc.) To determine the number of lay voting members, all congregations shall use the baptized membership reported for December 31 on the previous year's parochial report.*
- S.7.21.A02. In addition to the voting members to Synod Assemblies established by the above provisions, each congregation may send as one additional voting member a confirmed youth/young adult up to the age of 24.*
- †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.
- S7.22.** This synod may establish processes that permit retired rostered ministers, or those designated as disabled, 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. All retired Ministers of Word and Sacrament and Ministers of Word and Service of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America on the roster of the synod in attendance at the Synod Assembly shall be voting members of the Synod Assembly, consistent with †S7.21.*
- S7.23.** The presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and such other official representatives of this church as may be designated from time to time by the Church Council 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.
- 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 congregations under development and authorized worshiping communities of the synod, which have been authorized under ELCA bylaw 10.02.03., to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, consistent with †S7.21.
- 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 †S7.21. shall be granted the privilege of both voice and vote as members of the Synod Assembly.
- †**S7.31.** Proxy and absentee voting shall not be permitted in the transaction of any business of this synod.
- 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.

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.
- †**S8.12.** 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 synodical bishop of) approved candidates who have received and accepted a properly issued, duly attested letter of call for the office of minister of Word and Sacrament (and as provided in the bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America).
 - d. Consecrate (or provide for the consecration of) approved candidates who have received and accepted a properly issued, duly attested letter of call for service as ministers of Word and Service.
 - 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) Consult regularly with other synodical bishops and the Conference of 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 synodical 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 synodical 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 they become retired or disabled;
 - 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 and the register of congregations;
 - 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 register 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.

S8.12.01. The bishop shall also provide pastoral care and leadership for the specialized and/or extraparish ministries of the synod. [See †8.12.b.]

†S8.13. The synodical 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 ELCA secretary. The appointment continues until resignation or until a successor is appointed. The Synod Attorney provides legal advice and counsel to the synodical 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 synodical 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 synodical bishop.

†S8.16. **Conflicts of Interest**

- †S8.16.01.** The following procedures shall govern matters of potential conflicts of interest for synodical bishops:
- a. Whenever a synodical 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 synodical bishop shall withdraw from personal involvement in such matter and shall so notify the presiding bishop. The presiding bishop shall then appoint another synodical 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* (†S14.13.), candidacy, reinstatement, and similar matters where determinations or actions by the synodical 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 synodical 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.

S8.21.01 In addition the vice president shall perform any other duties or obligations that the bishop or the Synod Council assigns.

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 minister of Word and Sacrament.

†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.

S8.32.01. The secretary shall keep the minutes of the Synod Executive Committee.

S8.32.02. The secretary shall convene the nominating committee.

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 minister of Word and Sacrament.

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.

S8.42.01. In addition the treasurer shall perform any other duties or obligations that the bishop or the Synod Council assigns.

S8.50. General Provisions

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

- 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 years and may be re-elected.
- c. The treasurer of this synod shall be [elected] [appointed] to a four-year term and may be re-elected or reappointed.

S8.51.01. Officers of this synod may be elected for a maximum of three consecutive terms.

S8.52. The term of the bishop shall begin on the first day of the third month following the election. The terms of the vice-president, secretary and treasurer and the Synod Council members shall begin at the conclusion of the Synod Assembly at which they are elected.

†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 years. If the treasurer is appointed by the Synod Council, the Synod Council shall appoint a new treasurer to a four 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, by laws, 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 synodical 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 synodical 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 synodical 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 synodical 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:
 - 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 20.21.01. and as defined under the process described in ELCA constitutional provisions 20.20. and 20.21. 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 20.22.01. and as defined under the process described in ELCA constitutional provisions 20.20. and 20.21. 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 20.21.16. 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.
- S9.01.01. Persons elected to the Synod Council or synod committees shall be elected to a full term in that position unless otherwise specified in this constitution and bylaws, even if elected to a position made vacant by death or resignation.
- S9.01.02. No persons shall be elected to more than one synod position except:
- The bishop shall serve ex officio on all committees.
 - Persons elected to the Consultation Committee or the Committee on Discipline may be elected to other synod positions, unless that position is in conflict with the type of responsibilities handled by the Consultation and Discipline Committees.
- †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 4 members who shall be appointed by the Synod Council to serve for each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly. Additional nominations may be made from the floor for all elections for which nominations are made by the Nominating Committee.
- S9.04. The bishop shall be elected by the Synod Assembly by the following process.
- Each conference in this synod shall hold a nominating caucus and shall be permitted to nominate three persons for bishop.
 - Information of the nominated candidates and sufficient candidate forums to inform the persons of each conference shall be planned and carried out by the Synod Council.
 - A five ballot election process shall be used at the Synod Assembly, as follows:
 - Ballot one – 75 percent required for election with top six advancing to the next ballot.
 - Ballot two – 75 percent required for election with top four advancing to the next ballot.
 - Ballot three – 66 percent required for election with top three advancing to the next ballot.
 - Ballot four – 66 percent required for election with top two advancing to the next ballot.
 - Ballot five – Majority required for election.
 - Provision shall be made on the Synod Assembly program for at least the six top vote receivers to address the assembly during the election process.
 - In case of a tie for the last place to advance to the next ballot, all of those tied shall advance to the next ballot.
- S9.05. The Nominating Committee shall nominate up to two persons for vice president; additional nominations may be made from the floor.
- S9.06. The Nominating Committee shall nominate up to two persons for secretary; additional nominations may be made from the floor.
- S9.07. The Nominating Committee shall nominate up to two persons for treasurer; additional nominations may be made from the floor.
- S9.08. In all elections, except for the bishop, the names of the two persons receiving the highest number of votes, but not elected by a majority of the votes cast on a preceding ballot, shall be entered on the next ballot for each vacancy unfilled.
- 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 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 synodical 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.

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.
- a. 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.
 - b. The term of office of members of the Synod Council, with the exception of the officers and the youth members, shall be three years.
- †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:
- a. Exercise trusteeship responsibilities on behalf of this synod.
 - b. Recommend program goals and budgets to the regular meetings of the Synod Assembly.
 - c. Carry out the resolutions of the Synod Assembly.
 - d. 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.
 - e. Issue letters of call to rostered ministers as authorized by Chapter 7 of the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
 - f. 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.
 - g. Report its actions to the regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.
 - h. 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.
- S10.03.01. Further functions of the Synod Council shall be to:
- a. Meet at least twice annually, at the call of the bishop and/or the Executive Committee of the Synod Council.
 - b. Establish a Synod Executive Committee, also known as the Executive Committee of the Synod Council. [See S11.01.01.]
 - c. Provide directives to conferences for nominating voting members to the Churchwide Assembly which includes making sure all conferences are represented. This should include providing a list of names of synod leaders drawn from the lay officers, the Synod Council and the Synod committee members who are qualified to serve as voting members to the Churchwide Assembly.
 - d. Provide a call for nominations to the Conference Councils in ample time for conferences to hold required meetings before each Synod Assembly.
 - e. Review annually the purpose of committees appointed by the Synod Council.
 - f. Elect from its membership a Synod Council vice chair, who shall preside at meetings of the Synod Council or Synod Executive Committee, only if the synod vice president is not able to preside.
- 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.
- 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 meetings may be provided electronically.
- S10.07.02 The Synod Council for this synod shall consist of the four officers of the synod and 20 to 24 other members, which shall include:
- Twelve persons elected to the Synod Council by the Synod Assembly, after recommendation to that assembly by a nomination election in each conference, each conference nominating three persons: one clergy [also known as the dean], and two lay persons, one male and one female.
 - The four chairs of the Faith and Life Committees ex officio.
 - The president of the synod governing board of the Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America ex officio.
 - The chair of the committee of the extraparish clergy on call within the synod ex officio.
 - If the requirements for diversity [see section S6.04.] have not been met by the electoral process, the bishop, with the approval of the Synod Assembly or the Synod Council may appoint up to two additional members at large to the Synod Council to fulfill this requirement.
 - The chair of the Companion Synod/Global Mission Committee ex officio.
 - The chair of the Communications Committee ex officio.
- S10.07.03. Elected members of the Synod Council [see section S10.07.01.a.] shall be limited to two consecutive terms. The youth position shall be for a term of one year.

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 the Synod [also known as the Executive Committee of the Synod Council] shall be the four officers of the synod, the Synod Council vice-chair and four members [at least one of which shall be an ordained clergy] elected by the Synod Council from its membership [each conference in the synod shall be represented] for a one year term. The duties of the Executive Committee shall be:
- Give counsel in disputes within the synod in accordance to the Churchwide constitution and guidelines.
 - Hear expressions of concern from professional staff, congregations, or organizations within the synod, providing a forum for parties to work out matters causing distress, and to make appropriate recommendations for their resolution in accordance with the Churchwide constitution and guidelines.
 - Give counsel in disputes between committees or units of the synod in accordance to the Churchwide constitution and guidelines.
 - Be responsible for such additional tasks as may be given to it by the Synod Council.
 - Assist the bishop in planning, coordinating, and promoting the activities of the synod in keeping with Synod Council goals.
 - Make recommendations to the Synod Council about the time and place for the Synod Assembly, after consultation with the bishop and secretary of this synod.
- S11.01.02. A meeting of the Executive Committee of the synod may be called by the bishop, two officers, or three committee members.
- S11.01.11 There shall be a **Committee on Extraparish Ministries**. This committee shall consist of five synod members including two ordained ministers on call to extraparish ministries [one ordained minister shall be elected at large by the Synod Assembly and the other shall be the ordained minister in

extraparish ministry selected by the extraparish ministry caucus [S10.07.01.e] to sit on the Synod Council.] and three lay persons elected at large by the Synod Assembly for three year terms. The Committee on Extraparish Ministries shall:

- a. Assist the bishop to oversee extraparish ministries in the synod.
- b. In consultation with the bishop, develop a report procedure through which these ministries shall report annually to the bishop.
- c. Recommend policy for extraparish ministries and related personnel.
- d. Be available to the bishop and other responsible committees for counsel when synod extraparish ministries secure professional staff.
- e. Maintain a liaison with the Professional Service and Care Committee to assure that pastoral support and counsel is provided to professional staff who work in extraparish ministries in the synod.
- f. Convene caucuses and plan conferences for extraparish ministries as authorized by the Synod Council.
- g. Recommend to the Synod Council actions and programs as appropriate in these areas: The need for new or expanded ministries, the coordination of available Churchwide funding with synodical partners, the encouragement of congregational support and involvement with extraparish ministries and agencies which share these ministries, assistance in the greater integration of extraparish ministries into this church's total mission, the encouragement of persons to enter these ministries, and the representation of the synod before agencies involved in like ministries.
- h. Encourage cooperative efforts in extraparish ministries through the regions and other expressions of this church.

†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.

S11.02.01. The members of the Consultation Committee described in †S11.02. shall be selected as follows:
a. Four ordained clergy shall be elected from the clergy roster, one from each conference, and at least one of which shall be from the extraparish clergy of the synod.
b. Four lay persons shall be elected, each conference having one member on the committee.

†S11.03. The **Committee on Discipline** of this synod shall consist of 12 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.

S11.04.01. There shall be a Mutual Ministry Committee and it shall have at least three members, selected by the bishop and approved by the Synod Council. This committee shall meet at least twice a year as a support group for the bishop. The committee shall hold all matters discussed in confidence and shall make no report of its meetings.

†S11.05. The **Audit Committee** of this synod shall consist of three to six persons, none of whom are members 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. Committees shall be established expressing the congregational and extraparish ministries concerns for Faith and Life in the synod. The number of such committees and rules governing the election to

and operation of these committees shall be specified in the bylaws. These committees shall be known as **Faith and Life Committees**. The Faith and Life Committees shall be: Church in Society, Congregational Life, Mission Support, and Evangelism and Outreach.

S11.06.01. The following shall govern all Faith and Life Committees:

- a. Each committee shall be composed of up to 12 persons. Each conference shall nominate one layperson and one ordained clergy for a term of three years. Two to four laypersons at large shall be nominated by the synod nominating committee. Equal gender balance among the lay members shall be maintained. Special attention is to be given to include persons of color or persons whose primary language is other than English. Nomination by each conference shall take place before the Synod Assembly.
- b. The Executive Committee of the Synod Council shall appoint a convener for each of the Faith and Life Committees to call the first meeting following the synod assembly. Each Faith and Life Committee shall elect a chair to serve one year. The chair shall then convene and chair the remaining meetings of the committee until the next Synod Assembly and will represent the committee on the Synod Council.
 - i. *The committee chair of the Faith and Life Committees shall be elected by ecclesiastical ballot in which the first ballot shall be a nominating ballot. The bishop or bishop's designee shall chair the election. Candidates may withdraw from the election after the first ballot. In each succeeding ballot, the lowest recipient of votes shall be dropped from the ballot. An election shall be declared when a majority of votes are cast for a candidate.*
- c. Each committee shall elect a secretary annually. The secretary shall keep minutes of all meetings and the minutes shall be sent to the synod office and committee members within two weeks of the meeting.
- d. Committees shall meet at least semi-annually, with meeting time and place given to committee members in advance.
- e. Cooperative efforts with other synods, regions and the Churchwide organization shall be established as appropriate.
- f. Committees may appoint task forces or sub-committees.
- g. The bishop, Synod Assembly, or Synod Council may attach task forces or subcommittees to Faith and Life Committees.

S11.06.02. There shall be a Faith and Life Committee called the **Church in Society Committee**. This committee shall be responsible to help the synod interpret the Gospel of Jesus Christ within the context of the world in which we live. It shall address synodical, regional, Churchwide and global concerns and ministries. It shall serve as an advocate for peacemaking, for justice, for the hungry, for those who are excluded or oppressed, the handicapped and those who suffer in rural America. It shall provide educational opportunities, training events, and background materials for congregational use. It shall work in cooperation with and offer input to regional and Churchwide committees and commissions that address similar concerns. It shall work with partnership ministries which address these areas of concern.

S11.06.03. There shall be a Faith and Life Committee called the **Congregational Life Committee**. It shall address the congregational ministry needs of education, worship, music and youth.

S11.06.04. There shall be a Faith and Life Committee called the **Mission Support Committee**. This committee shall interpret and communicate to the congregations of this synod the mission of this church including the stewardship needs and responsibilities of this synod, the region, and the ELCA. It shall assist congregations in understanding and utilizing the opportunities for giving time, talent, gifts and possessions to the work of the Church through the channels of this synod and the ELCA.

S11.06.05. There shall be a Faith and Life Committee known as the **Evangelism and Outreach Committee**. This committee shall have primary responsibilities in the area of evangelism and outreach. This committee shall be responsible for assisting the congregations and ministries of the synod in their gospel outreach into their own membership, into the communities of the synod, and into the entire world.

*This synod considers evangelism to be the task of The Church, a task which is not optional; it is the central calling of The Church. While the methods by which outreach/evangelism/ sharing Christ is accomplished may vary [in fact are many in number], these methods should not be confused with the task of proclamation or evangelism. Utilizing tools created by this committee or adapting

resources available through other synods, regions or Churchwide expressions, this committee shall focus these tools for the use of synod ministries.

- S11.06.06. There shall be a **Communications Committee**. This committee shall be a servant to the communications needs of the synod office, the Synod Council, congregations and ministries within the synod, and boards and committees that may employ its expertise. It shall develop strategies for communication and media use within the synod. It shall assist synod congregations to be closely linked with one another, the synod office, the region and the Churchwide organization. It shall consist of at least 60 percent lay members appointed by the Synod Council.
- a. This committee shall consist of at least 12 members appointed for three-year terms, nominated by the synod nominating committee, including the following roles and categories:
 - i. at least one member from each of the four synod conferences, nominated for their skills in writing, layout, media, marketing, video, public relations, digital photography, or graphic design;
 - ii. the synod webmaster and two assistant webmasters ex officio;
 - iii. the synod Communicator ex officio;
 - iv. the editor of the Coulee Courier and The Lutheran insert ex officio;
 - v. coordinators of other programs established by this committee.
 - b. The committee chair shall be elected annually by ecclesiastical ballot in which the first ballot shall be a nominating ballot. The bishop or bishop's designee shall chair the election. Candidates may withdraw from the election after the first ballot. In each succeeding ballot, the lowest recipient of votes shall be dropped from the ballot. An election shall be declared when a majority of votes are cast for a candidate.
- S11.06.07. There shall be a **Professional Service and Care Committee** to assist the bishop in the care of ordained ministers, associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers.
- a. This committee shall consist of the bishop, four ordained ministers and three laypersons. These shall be appointed by the bishop of the synod for three-year terms, and approved by the Synod Council. The four ordained clergy shall be selected, one from each of the four conferences of the synod.
 - b. This committee shall:
 - i. Meet at least quarterly, more often if needed.
 - ii. Provide proper liaison and cooperation with other synods and the region in order to assist ordained clergy, associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers in finding calls and encouraging healthy movement of professional staff persons.
 - iii. Assist, as requested by the bishop, in professional growth, continuing education, support services, counseling, retreats, and events with spouses, overseeing such areas as are agreed upon between the bishop, deans, and the committee.
 - iv. Guide professional staff persons, when requested, in making continuing education choices to achieve development goals.
 - v. Plan and develop educational opportunities, including the Spring Theological Conference each year which pastors and lay rostered professionals are expected to attend and to which Synod Council members are invited.
 - vi. Provide salary and benefit guidelines for staff professionals.
 - vii. Provide assistance, if requested by the bishop, in any part of the call process when he/she requests such help.
- S11.06.08. There shall be a **Candidacy Committee** to aid the bishop in the care of candidates from the synod preparing for ministry as ordained ministers or associates in ministry, deaconesses, or diaconal ministers. This committee shall consist of the bishop of the synod, three ordained ministers, and three laypersons, appointed by the bishop for three-year terms and approved by the Synod Council. This committee shall:
- a. Approve candidates for ordination upon recommendation of seminary and regional certification boards or committees.
 - b. Certify associates in ministry, deaconesses and diaconal ministers as recommended by the proper boards and committees of the ELCA.
 - c. Administer such scholarship funds as shall be held by the synod.

- d. Seek to recruit and encourage persons to become candidates for professional staff vocations. Provide opportunities for persons of color and persons whose primary language is other than English to prepare for professional vocations in this church
- e. Provide personal support and care for candidates.
- f. Seek financial assistance and scholarships for candidates.

S11.06.09. There shall be a **Global Mission Committee** and it shall consist of at least 60 percent lay members selected by the bishop and approved by the Synod Council.

- a. The La Crosse Area Synod shall be in a companion synod relationship with the Iglesia Luterana del Perú (IL-P)*. The purpose of this relationship shall be to prayerfully walk together in Christ. This committee shall be responsible for developing and overseeing this relationship.

* Lutheran Church of Peru

- b. All requests and plans for developing this relationship, including material or financial assistance for our companion synod, shall be coordinated through this committee, the bishop, the ELCA Global Mission program unit, and the leadership of IL-P.
- c. This relationship may be extended to include other synods.
- d. This committee shall consist of at least 12 members for three-year terms, including the following:
 - i. at least one representative from each of the four synod conferences;
 - ii. at least one communicator/publicist;
 - iii. the chairs and coordinators of Global Mission subcommittees and affiliated groups;
 - iv. at larger members.
- e. The chair of this committee shall be nominated by the bishop and appointed by the Synod Council for a term of one year and may be reappointed. The secretary of this committee shall be elected by the committee for a term of one year and may be re-elected.

S11.06.11. There shall be a **LYLE Advisory Team** whose purpose shall be to assist congregations in strengthening the faith of youth through education, fellowship, service and witness, empowering youth to be Lutheran Youth Leading Evangelism, and nurturing an environment where concerns relevant to each new generation of youth are intentionally addressed.

- a. The LYLE Advisory Team shall consist of the following:
 - i. One clergy representative from each of the four synod conferences elected by the Synod Assembly for a two-year term,
 - ii. One lay representative from each of the four synod conferences elected by the Synod Assembly for a two-year term,
 - iii. Two 9th through 12th grade youth representatives from each of the four synod conferences, recruited and appointed annually by the LYLE Advisory Team,
 - iv. A representative of the Synod Office assigned by the Bishop.
- b. The LYLE Advisory Team shall meet as a whole at least twice a year.
- c. The Advisory Team shall sponsor and have oversight responsibility for fellowship, service, and educational events for youth and adults. The Advisory Team may appoint groups to carry out these events. Programs will include but are not limited to the following:
 - i. Confirmation events that allow youth the opportunity to experience the ministries of the larger church.
 - ii. An annual high school youth opportunity to gather for education, vocational exploration, fellowship, worship, service and witness.
 - iii. Helping to coordinate synod involvement in Churchwide youth events.
 - iv. Training for Pastors/Youth Leaders that educates and equips them to be examples and guides in leadership and to engage youth in conversations of vocation (including youth work, rostered ministry and participation in service ministries such as Young Adults in Global Mission and the Lutheran Volunteer Corps).
 - v. Maintaining networks of education and support within Youth Ministry for paid and volunteer leaders

S11.06.12. There shall be an **Endowment Fund Board** which shall administer the La Crosse Area Synod "Mission Endowment Funds."

- a. The endowment fund shall consist of perpetual funds which shall distribute a maximum of five percent (5%) of the market value of invested assets each year, not to exceed the income earned

- in that year. Special gifts funds shall be used in accordance with specific directions associated with the gift. The purpose of the perpetual funds shall be for "new ministries and new leaders" of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- b. The Endowment Fund Board shall consist of the bishop, the synod treasurer and six other members appointed by the Synod Council for three-year terms, one-third to expire each year. The Board shall elect from its membership a chair, vice-chair, secretary and treasurer. The Endowment Fund Board may appoint such advisory committees as it deems advisable.
 - c. The Endowment Fund Board shall:
 - i. Directly or through the Synod receive funds from gifts, memorials, bequests, wills, estates, etc., of any individual, corporation or organization, or from any other source in cash or in other property acceptable to it. All trust funds shall be kept and maintained separate, distinct and independent from the funds and property otherwise belonging to the Synod.
 - ii. Be responsible for the prudent investment of the Endowment Fund. However, all investments shall be invested by outside investors such as ELCA Endowment Fund Pooled Trust and/or ELCA Mission Investment Fund. No board member shall invest the assets in a way that would bring private inurement to that individual.
 - iii. Investigate specific projects and purposes to be funded by the Endowment Fund. The Board shall seek recommendations for use of the Endowment Fund from the Synod Council, the bishop and others as appropriate.
 - iv. Contribute, donate, support or distribute, from time to time, for its purposes such payments or amounts as the Endowment Fund Board in its discretion shall determine, with the concurrence of the Executive Committee of the Synod.
 - v. At least quarterly render an account to the Executive Committee of the Synod Council and annually render a full and complete account of the administration of the Endowment Fund to the Synod Council and Synod Assembly.
 - vi. Develop and pursue fund raising activities including encouragement and enlistment of resources and cultivation of "perpetual stewardship" through bequests, annuities, deferred giving and other sources.
 - vii. Work with the Executive Committee of the La Crosse Area Synod to develop and review policies and guidelines appropriate to its purpose, function and distribution of funds at least annually. *Initial preference for distributions shall be given to seminarian financial assistance and new missions.*
 - viii. Bring to Synod Assembly for its consideration a resolution which would disburse any perpetual fund principal other than the maximum distribution as described in S11.05.12.a. above. The favorable recommendation of the Endowment Fund Board, the Synod Council, and adoption by at least two-thirds (2/3) of those present and voting at Synod Assembly shall be required before any perpetual fund principal or core shall be disbursed.

S11.10. General Provisions

- S11.11.** 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.

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 partners, 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 partners.

S12.01.01. The La Crosse Area Synod shall be divided into four conferences, for purposes of fellowship and for carrying out the above given mission tasks [S12.01]. Each conference shall be a nominating unit for nominating persons to represent the conference, as specified elsewhere in the bylaws.

S12.01.02. West Conference shall include these congregations:

St. Paul's, La Crosse, Wisconsin
Bethel, La Crosse, Wisconsin
Trinity, La Crosse, Wisconsin
Our Redeemer, La Crosse, Wisconsin
Our Savior's, La Crosse, Wisconsin
English, La Crosse, Wisconsin
Good Shepherd, La Crosse, Wisconsin
Our Savior's, West Salem, Wisconsin
Lower Coon Valley, Stoddard, Wisconsin
First, Onalaska, Wisconsin
Prince of Peace, La Crescent, Minnesota
Immanuel, Caledonia, Minnesota
Wilmington, Caledonia, Minnesota
Faith of Black Hammer, Spring Grove, Minnesota

S12.01.03. South Conference shall include these congregations, all in the State of Wisconsin:

North Coon Prairie, Cashton
Portland, Cashton
Trinity, Cashton
Immanuel, Cashton
Bethany, Viroqua
Zion, Viroqua
Good Shepherd, Viroqua
Immanuel, Viroqua
Bethel, Viroqua
Mt. Sterling, Mt. Sterling
Utica, Mt. Sterling
Peace, Readstown
Bethany, La Farge
Fish Creek Ridge, Rockland
Brush Creek, Ontario
Our Savior's, Westby
Skogdalen, Westby
Vang, Westby
Westby Coon Prairie, Westby
Coon Valley, Coon Valley
Freeman, Ferryville
DeSoto, DeSoto
Luther Memorial, Gays Mills
St. Peter Evangelical, Prairie du Chien
Our Savior's, Soldiers Grove
Kickapoo United, Soldiers Grove
St. Paul, Wauzeka
Middle Coon Valley, Chaseburg

S12.01.04. East Conference shall include these congregations, all in the State of Wisconsin:

St. Paul's, Wilton
Trinity, Sparta
Peace, Tomah
Woodland, Nekoosa
Trinity, Adams

Zion, Big Flats
St. Stephen's, Camp Douglas
St. Peter's, Camp Douglas
Fountain, Hustler
Trinity, Hustler
Bethany, New Lisbon
East Lemonweir, Elroy
Grace, Elroy
Bethany, Mauston

S12.01.05. North Conference shall include these congregations, all in the State of Wisconsin:

St. John, Alma
Bells Coulee, Bangor
Blair, Blair
Fagernes, Blair
Christ, Arcadia
Living Hope, Ettrick
Hardies Creek, Ettrick
South Beaver Creek, Ettrick
North Beaver Creek, Ettrick
French Creek, Ettrick
Zion, Galesville
Mt. Calvary, Trempealeau
Tamarack, Arcadia
Mindoro, Mindoro
Lewis Valley, Holmen
Holmen, Holmen
Halfway Creek, Holmen
Journey, Onalaska

S12.01.06. A congregation or a parish desiring to realign with a different conference within the synod shall make such a request to the Synod Council, together with supporting reasons and information. The Synod Council shall consider and act upon that request, reporting its action to the next Synod Assembly.

S12.01.07. Conferences may organize as desired within the following guidelines:

- a. Rules of operation or a constitution for the conference shall be approved by the Synod Council and shall be on file in the office of the bishop.
- b. There shall be a conference council of four to 12 elected members.
- c. A dean shall be elected by each conference for a three-year term. This dean shall:
 - i. Be an active member of the La Crosse Area Synod clergy roster.
 - ii. Be the elected clergy member of the Synod Council from the conference.
 - iii. Be a member of the conference council.
 - iv. Be available to the bishop to assist with dedications, anniversaries, pastoral care of pastors and rostered lay leaders and their families and other duties within the conference, as requested and arranged by and with the bishop.
 - v. Be responsible to lead conference pastoral conferences and, with other conference deans, shall plan the Fall Theological Conference each year which pastors and lay rostered professionals are expected to attend.
- d. Fellowship among pastors, professional staff members and members of conference congregations shall be encouraged and enhanced. Shared ministries and the mission of the church within the conference shall be facilitated by the conference structures.
- e. The conference shall meet, at least annually, in a conference assembly or a caucus of the Synod Assembly voting members, or both, to conduct necessary business and to elect a dean and to nominate representatives to the Synod Council and other synod committees. These nominations shall take place either at a meeting called prior to the Synod Assembly, or at a caucus at the

assembly, assuring that the names of the persons nominated are available to the Synod Assembly for election and recording in the minutes of the Synod Assembly.

- a. At the conference assembly or caucus of the Synod Assembly the bishop or bishop's designee shall preside over the nomination for dean which shall be by ecclesiastical ballot in which the first ballot shall be a nominating ballot. Candidates may withdraw from the election after the first ballot. In each succeeding ballot, the lowest recipient of votes shall be dropped from the ballot. The nomination, which shall go forward to the Synod Assembly, shall be declared when a majority of votes are cast for a candidate.
- f. There shall be a conference **Nominating Committee** whose members shall be elected at the annual caucus and shall serve for the following year. The conference Nominating Committee shall nominate conference candidates for the Synod Council, synod committees, conference offices and committees. The conference Nominating Committee shall be composed of three persons from the conference, elected by the conference or the conference voting members of the Synod Assembly. The dean of each conference shall report the names and addresses of this committee to the secretary of the synod. One person from each conference shall be selected by the Synod Council at the first meeting after Synod Assembly to serve on the Synod Nominating Committee. He or she shall serve as convener for the conference Nominating Committee.

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 register 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 ELCA constitution and bylaws.
 - 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 the ELCA 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 leaders 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 make contact with the ELCA synod bishop or staff where the congregation is located.
 - 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 register of congregations.
- †S13.02. It shall be the responsibility of each congregation of this synod annually 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.
- †S13.19. 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.
- †S13.20. 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.
- S13.21. The alignment of congregations in pastoral charges, and all alterations in any alignment, shall be subject to approval by the Synod Assembly or by the Synod Council.
- †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 ELCA constitution 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. If any congregation of this synod has disbanded, or if the members of a congregation agree that it is no longer possible for it to function as such, or if it is the opinion of the Synod Council that the membership of a congregation has become so scattered or so diminished in numbers as to make it impractical for such a congregation to fulfill the purposes for which it was organized or that it is necessary for this synod to protect the congregation's property from waste and deterioration, the Synod Council, itself or through trustees appointed by it, may take charge and control of the property of the congregation to hold, manage, and convey the same on behalf of this synod. The congregation shall have the right to appeal the decision to the Synod Assembly.
- S13.25. This synod may temporarily assume administration of a congregation upon its request or with its concurrence.
- S13.30. **Discipline**
- †S13.31. Congregations and members of congregations are subject to discipline in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 20 of the ELCA constitution and bylaws.
- S13.40. **Synodically Authorized Worshiping Communities**
- 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 congregations or non-congregational service of 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,
 - a. 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 distribution of its communications and publications;
 - 7) witness to the Kingdom of God in the community, in the nation and abroad; and
 - 8) speak publically to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, calling for justice and proclaiming God's love for the world.
- b. 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; and
 - 4) with the council, administer discipline.
 - 5) endeavor to increase the support given by the congregation to the work of the ELCA churchwide organization and of this synod.
- S14.13.** The pastor (a) shall keep accurate parochial records of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, 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.
- S14.13.01. The annual parish parochial report submitted by pastors of congregations shall fulfill this reporting requirement. Pastors in extraparish ministries shall submit an annual report in a form and at a time designated by the bishop in consultation with the Committee on Extraparish Ministries.
- 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 Lutheran 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:
- 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 pastor.
 - b. 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.
 - c. 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 14 days of receipt of such call. In exceptional circumstances with the approval of the bishop of this synod and the chair of the Congregation Council of the congregation issuing the call, an additional 14 days may be granted to respond to a letter of call.
- †**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 death or, following consultation with the synodical 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 as disabled. Upon removal of the disability and restoration of 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.

S14.18.01. The committee indicated in †S14.18.b. shall be selected by the bishop from the members of the Consultation Committee for each situation, as needed. If the bishop determines that the situation requires special skills, he or she may select one person with the needed skills from outside the Consultation Committee. The persons selected by the bishop may recommend a full review of the situation by the Consultation Committee. The persons selected for this committee [to accompany the bishop and assist in evaluating the "local difficulty"] shall continue for the duration of that situation only.

†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 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 synodical 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 consecration of those persons properly called to congregations or non-congregational service of 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 Ministry 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 the ELCA 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 14 days of receipt of such a call. In exceptional circumstances with the approval of the bishop of this synod and the chair of the Congregation Council of the congregation issuing the call, an additional 14 days may be granted to respond to a letter of call.
- †S14.43.**
- 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 death or, following consultation with the synodical 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 and the minister of Word and Service shall be listed on the roster of ministers of Word and Service as disabled. 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 must 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.

- †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:
- a. installation in another call, or
 - b. approval of a request for change in roster status.
- †S14.46. With the approval of the synodical 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 units that share responsibly in God's mission, all share in the responsibility to develop, implement, and strengthen the financial support program 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 and thus partnership in this church should be evidenced in determining each part's share of the gifts and offerings. Therefore:

- a. 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.

S15.11.a.1. To fulfill the policy and practice of our church, a congregation's intention or decision to reduce or withhold its Mission Support will include consultation with representatives of the synod, such as a Synod Council officer or member, a synod staff member, and a member of the Mission Support Committee.

- b. 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.
- c. 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 partnership 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. Such revision by the Synod Council shall not exceed the projected budget expenditures in total.

- 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 synodical 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.

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.
- †**S16.03.** 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 synodical bishop or when written charges against a congregation are made in disciplinary proceedings by the Synod Council or the synodical 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. ADJUDICATION

- †S17.01. The synodical bishop and the Executive Committee of the Synod Council shall be available to give counsel when disputes arise within this synod.
- †S17.02. The synodical 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 the matter at issue cannot be resolved in this manner, the prescribed 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 among units of this synod on a substantive issue that cannot be resolved by the parties, the aggrieved party or parties may appeal to the synodical bishop and the Executive Committee of the Synod Council for a consultation. If this consultation fails to resolve the issue, a petition may be addressed by the parties to the Synod Council requesting it to arbitrate the issue. The decision of the Synod Council shall be final.
- †S17.04. When a component or beneficiary of a synod has a disagreement on a substantive issue that it cannot resolve, it may address an appeal to the synodical bishop and the Executive Committee of the Synod Council. 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 among factions within a congregation on a substantive issue that cannot be resolved by the parties, members of a congregation shall have access to the synodical bishop for consultation after informing the chair of the Congregation Council of their intent. If the consultation fails to resolve the issue(s), the Consultation Committee of this synod shall consider the matter. If the Consultation Committee of this synod shall fail to resolve the issue(s), the matter shall be referred to the Synod Council, whose 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:

- a. An amendment may be adopted by a two-thirds vote at a regular meeting of the Synod Assembly after having been presented in writing at the previous regular meeting of the Synod Assembly over the signatures of at least thirty members and having been approved by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting at such a regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.
- b. 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.