

Sierra Pacific Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

**CONSTITUTION, BYLAWS, and
CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS**

as adopted by the Constituting Convention
of the Sierra Pacific Synod
in San Jose, California
July 12, 1987

and

as last amended by the Sierra Pacific Synod Council
February 5, 2022

MISSION STATEMENT

Sierra Pacific Synod

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

This Synod is an expression of the Church, empowered by the Holy Spirit to be a witness to God's creative, redeeming and sanctifying activity in all the world.

Recognizing that the context of this Synod reflects a great variety of ethnic traditions, languages, races, and economic groups, our mission is:

- 1) to assist congregations in proclaiming, celebrating and struggling with what it means to live out the Good News of Jesus Christ;
- 2) to support the institutions and agencies of the Church located within the territory of this Synod, and other institutions and agencies for which we have responsibility;
- 3) to meet human needs in response to God's love and to be an advocate for all who suffer injustice, with special focus on victims of racism, sexism and other forms of oppression;
- 4) to place as one of our highest priorities the commitment of synodical and churchwide budget for the intentional creation of an inclusive church;
- 5) to promote the inclusive church which Christ intended, reflecting the multicultural and economic diversity within our boundaries;
- 6) to participate in the life and global mission of the ELCA, promoting its support through our congregations;and,
- 7) to grow in our relationship with the worldwide Lutheran communion, the ecumenical church, and their religious expressions.

Adopted by the 1988 Sierra Pacific Synod Assembly
May 14, 1988
Sacramento, California

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Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions

Sierra Pacific Synod

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Chapter 1

NAME AND INCORPORATION

- †S1.01. The name of this synod as determined by the Churchwide Assembly shall be Sierra Pacific Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- †S1.02. For the purposes of this constitution and the accompanying bylaws, the Sierra Pacific 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 a circle that includes the name of the synod and the date of its incorporation.

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 Alameda, Alpine, Amador, Butte, Calaveras, Colusa, Contra Costa, Del Norte, El Dorado, Fresno, Glenn, Humboldt, Inyo, Kings, Lake, Lassen, Madera, Marin, Mariposa, Mendocino, Merced, Modoc, Mono, Monterey, Napa, Nevada, Placer, Plumas, Sacramento, San Benito, San Francisco, San Joaquin, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Shasta, Sierra, Siskiyou, Solano, Sonoma, Stanislaus, Sutter, Tehama, Trinity, Tulare, Tuolumne, Yolo, Yuba in the state of CALIFORNIA; the counties of Churchill, Douglas, Elko, Eureka, Humboldt, Lander, Lyon, Mineral, Pershing, Storey, Washoe, White Pine, and the consolidated municipality of Carson City in the state of NEVADA.
- †S3.02. "Determined by the Churchwide Assembly," as stipulated by †S3.01., is understood to include the reported changes in synod relationship made by any congregation in a border area agreed under ELCA Bylaws 10.01.01. and 10.01.03.

Chapter 4

CONFESSION OF FAITH

- †S4.01. This synod confesses the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- †S4.02. This synod confesses Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and the Gospel as the power of God for the salvation of all who believe.
- a. 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.
 - b. 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.
 - c. 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 Scriptures and confessed in the ecumenical creeds and Lutheran confessional writings, as the power of God to create and sustain the Church for God's mission in the world.

Chapter 5 NATURE OF THE CHURCH

- †S5.01. All power in the Church belongs to our Lord Jesus Christ, its head. All actions of this synod are to be carried out under his rule and authority.
- †S5.02. This church confesses the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church and is resolved to serve Christian Unity throughout the world.
- †S5.03. The Church exists both as an inclusive fellowship and as local congregations gathered for worship and Christian service. Congregations find their fulfillment in the universal community of the Church, and the universal Church exists in and through congregations. This church, therefore, derives its character and powers both from the sanction and representation of its congregations and from its inherent nature as an expression of the broader fellowship of the faithful. In length, it acknowledges itself to be in the historic continuity of the communion of saints; in breadth, it expresses the fellowship of believers and congregations in our day.
- †S5.04. This church, inspired and led by the Holy Spirit, participates in the Lutheran World Federation as a global communion of churches, engaging in faithful witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ and in service for the sake of God's mission in the world.

Chapter 6 STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

- †S6.01. The Church is a people created by God in Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit, called and sent to bear witness to God's creative, redeeming, and sanctifying activity in the world.
- †S6.02. To participate in God's mission, this synod as a part of the Church shall:
 - a. Proclaim God's saving Gospel of justification by grace for Christ's sake through faith alone, according to the apostolic witness in the Holy Scripture, preserving and transmitting the Gospel faithfully to future generations.
 - b. Carry out Christ's Great Commission by reaching out to all people to bring them to faith in Christ and by doing all ministry with a global awareness consistent with the understanding of God as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier of all.
 - c. Serve in response to God's love to meet human needs, caring for the sick and the aged, advocating dignity and justice for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, and standing with the poor and powerless, and committing itself to their needs.
 - d. Worship God in proclamation of the Word and administration of the sacraments and through lives of prayer, praise, thanksgiving, witness, and service.
 - e. Nurture its members in the Word of God so as to grow in faith and hope and love, to see daily life as the primary setting for the exercise of their Christian calling, and to use the gifts of the Spirit for their life together and for their calling in the world.
 - f. Manifest the unity given to the people of God by living together in the love of Christ and by joining with other Christians in prayer and action to express and preserve the unity which the Spirit gives.
- †S6.03. This synod, in cooperation with the churchwide organization, shall bear primary responsibility for the oversight of the life and mission of this church in its territory. In fulfillment of this role and consistent with policies and procedures of this church, the synod shall:
 - a. Provide for pastoral care of congregations and rostered ministers in the synod;
 - b. Plan for, facilitate, and nurture the mission of this church through congregations;
 - c. Strengthen interdependent relationships among congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization, and foster relationships with agencies and institutions affiliated with or related to this church as well as ecumenical partners.
 - d. Interpret the work of this church to congregations and to the public on the territory of the synod.
- †S6.03.01. The responsibilities of the synod include the following:
 - a. providing for pastoral care of congregations, ministers of Word and Sacrament, and ministers of Word and Service in the synod, including:

- 1) approving candidates for the ministry of Word and Sacrament in cooperation with the appropriate seminaries of this church, which may be done through multi-synod committees;
 - 2) authorizing ordinations and ordaining ministers of Word and Sacrament on behalf of this church;
 - 3) approving ministers of Word and Service, which may be done through multi-synod committees;
 - 4) authorizing ordinations and ordaining ministers of Word and Service on behalf of this church; and
 - 5) consulting in the call process for rostered ministers.
- b. providing for leadership recruitment, preparation, and support in accordance with churchwide standards and policies, including:
- 1) nurturing and supporting congregations and lay leaders;
 - 2) seeking and recruiting qualified candidates for the rostered ministries of this church;
 - 3) making provision for pastoral care, call review, and guidance;
 - 4) encouraging and supporting persons on the rosters of this church in stewardship of their abilities, care of self, and pursuit of continuing education to undergird their effectiveness of service; and
 - 5) supporting recruitment of leaders for this church's colleges, universities, seminaries, and social ministry organizations.
- c. providing for discipline of congregations, ministers of Word and Sacrament, and ministers of Word and Service; as well as for termination of call, appointment, adjudication, and appeals consistent with Chapter 20 of this church's constitution.
- d. providing for archives in conjunction with other synods.
- †S6.03.02. In planning for, facilitating, and nurturing the mission of this church through congregations, the responsibilities of the synod include the following:
- a. developing of new ministries, redevelopment of existing ministries, and support and assistance in the conclusion, if necessary, of a particular ministry;
 - b. leading and encouraging of congregations in their evangelism efforts;
 - c. assisting members of its congregations in carrying out their ministries in the world;
 - d. encouraging congregations to respond to human need, work for justice and peace, care for the sick and the suffering, and participate responsibly in society;
 - e. providing resources for congregational life;
 - f. grouping congregations in conferences, clusters, coalitions, or other area subdivisions for mission purposes.
- †S6.03.03. In strengthening interdependent relationships among congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization, and in fostering relationships with agencies and institutions affiliated with or related to this church as well as with ecumenical partners, the responsibilities of the synod include the following:
- a. promoting interdependent relationships among congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization, and entering into relationships with other synods in the region;
 - b. fostering organizations for youth, women, and men, and organizations for language or ethnic communities;
 - c. developing relationships with social ministry organizations and ministries, participating in their mission planning, and providing supportive funding;
 - d. supporting relationships with and providing supportive funding on behalf of colleges, universities, and campus ministries;
 - e. maintaining relationships with and providing supportive funding on behalf of seminaries and continuing education centers;
 - f. fostering supporting relationships with camps and other outdoor ministries;
 - g. fostering supporting relationships with preschools, elementary schools, and secondary schools operated by congregations of the synod;
 - h. fostering relationships with ecumenical and global companions;
 - i. cooperating with other synods and the churchwide organization in creating, using, and supporting regions to carry out those functions of the synod which can best be done cooperatively with other synods and the churchwide organization.
- †S6.03.04. In interpreting the work of this church on the territory of the synod, the responsibilities of the synod include the following:
- a. encouraging financial support for the work of this church by individuals and congregations;
 - b. participating in churchwide programs;

- c. interpreting social statements in a manner consistent with the interpretation given by the churchwide unit or office which assisted in the development of the statement, and suggestion of social study issues;
- d. providing ecumenical guidance and encouragement.

†S6.04. Except as otherwise provided in this constitution and bylaws, the Synod Council shall establish processes that will ensure that at least 60 percent of the members of the synod assemblies, councils, committees, boards, and other organizational units shall be laypersons; and that at least 45 percent of the lay members of assemblies, councils, committees, boards, or other organizational units shall be women and at least 45 percent shall be men; and that, where possible, the representation of ministers of Word and Sacrament shall include both men and women. This synod shall establish processes that will enable it to reach a minimum goal that 10 percent of its assemblies, councils, committees, boards, or other organizational units be persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English.

S6.04.A16 This synod interprets synod provision †S6.04, and ELCA constitutional provision 5.01.g, on which †S6.04 is based, as fundamentally inclusive statements of participation within the life and work of the synod. While these provisions make specific reference to “male” and “female” members, this synod acknowledges and celebrates the full spectrum of gender identities claimed by children of God throughout our church. In no way shall the binary language of “male” and “female” in any provision of this synod’s governing documents be used to exclude an individual from full participation in the life and work of this synod if they claim another gender identity. The Synod Council shall work to communicate, uphold, and implement this interpretation as necessary. The Synod Council shall update this continuing resolution and any provision of these governing documents referencing gender upon the conclusion of the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly.

†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 synod units shall be conclusively presumed to have been properly constituted, and neither the method of selection nor the composition of any such assembly, council, committee, board, commission, task force, or other body may be challenged in a court of law by any person or be used as the basis of a challenge in a court of law to the validity or effect of any action taken or authorized by any such assembly, council, committee, board, commission, task force, or other body.

†S6.06. References herein to the nature of the relationship between the three expressions of this church—congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization—as being interdependent or as being in a partnership relationship describe the mutual responsibility of these expressions in God’s mission and the fulfillment of the purposes of this church as described in this chapter, and do not imply or describe the creation of partnerships, co-ventures, agencies, or other legal relationships recognized in civil law.

Chapter 7 SYNOD ASSEMBLY

†S7.01. This synod shall have a Synod Assembly, which shall be its highest legislative authority. The powers of the Synod Assembly are limited only by the provisions of the Articles of Incorporation, this constitution and bylaws, the assembly’s own resolutions, and the constitution and bylaws of this church.

†S7.11. A regular meeting of the Synod Assembly shall be held at least triennially.

S7.11.01. The Synod Assembly shall meet annually.

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 regular meetings of the Synod Assembly shall be given by the secretary of this synod not less than 60 days prior to the convening date.
- S7.14. All members present at any session of a duly-called meeting of the Synod Assembly shall constitute a quorum.
- †S7.21. The membership of the Synod Assembly, of which at least 60 percent of the voting membership shall be composed of lay persons, shall be constituted as follows:
- a. All ministers of Word and Sacrament under call on the roster of this synod in attendance at the Synod Assembly shall be voting members.
 - b. All ministers of Word and Service, under call, on the roster of this synod shall be voting members in the Synod Assembly.
 - 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 more than 175 baptized members related to this synod, typically one of whom shall be a man and one of whom shall be a woman, shall be voting members. The Synod Council shall establish a formula to provide additional lay representation from congregations on the basis of number of baptized members in the congregation. The Synod Council shall seek to ensure that at least 45 percent of the lay members of the assembly shall be women and at least 45 percent shall be men.
 - d. Voting membership shall include the officers of this synod.
- †S7.21.01. Voting members shall begin serving with the opening of a regular Synod Assembly and shall continue serving until voting members are seated at the next regular Synod Assembly.
- †S7.21.02. If a special Synod Assembly is called and voting members at the previous assembly are unable to serve as voting members, where permitted by state law, the congregation through the Congregation Council may elect new members who shall continue to serve until the next Synod Assembly.
- S7.21.03. Congregations with fewer than 175 baptized members may send one additional lay member to the Synod Assembly beyond the minimum required by †S7.21. If such a congregation is sending only one member, they may choose either a lay male or a lay female; if sending two members, one must be male and one female. Voting members shall begin serving with the opening of a regular Synod Assembly and shall continue serving until voting members are seated at the next regular Synod Assembly.
- S7.21.04. The youth from the Synod Youth Committee shall be voting members of the Assembly.
- S7.22. This synod may establish processes that permit retired rostered ministers, or those granted disability status, or on leave from call, on the roster of this 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. Not less than 90 days prior to the convening of the Assembly, the Secretary of the Synod shall mail a letter to all retired ordained ministers, retired associates in ministry, retired deaconesses, and retired diaconal ministers on the combined rosters of the Synod, asking if they are willing to serve as a voting member of that year's Assembly. From the list of those who reply affirmatively, the secretary shall designate a number equal to 5 percent of the total number on the combined rosters who shall be selected as voting members. The names of those replying affirmatively shall be placed in alphabetical order, and the persons selected shall be chosen alphabetically, moving down the list from the alphabetical point where the previous year's list of voting members left off. Alternates shall be designated by continuing down the list in alphabetical order, but alternates who are not seated as voting members will continue to be eligible the next year. The secretary shall notify all retired rostered persons of the results of this process.
- †S7.23. The presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and such other official representatives of the churchwide organization as may be designated by the presiding bishop shall have voice but not vote in the meetings of the Synod Assembly. Like privileges shall be accorded to those additional persons whom the Synod Assembly shall from time to time designate.
- S7.24. Ministers under call on the rosters of this synod shall remain as voting 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 member of the Synod Assembly shall be a voting member of a congregation of this synod.

- S7.26. This synod may establish processes through the Synod Council that permit representatives of authorized worshipping communities of the synod, which have been authorized under ELCA bylaw 10.02.04., to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, consistent with †S7.21.
- S7.26.A00. *Two lay members from each synod authorized worshipping community shall be voting members to the Synod Assembly.*
- 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.
- S7.29. Each ordained minister on the roster of the synod who is retired or on leave from call and, at the time of an assembly, is serving a congregation as an interim pastor pursuant to a letter of agreement approved by the bishop of the Synod shall be a voting member of that assembly.
- †S7.31. Proxy and absentee voting shall not be permitted in the transaction of any business of the Synod Assembly.
- S7.32. *Robert's Rules of Order*, latest edition, shall govern parliamentary procedure of the Synod Assembly.
- 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.
- S8.11.01. When authorized by the Synod Council in order to address special circumstances, the synod bishop may be compensated as an employee or contractor for specified services to another expression of this church. Such an arrangement may be terminated by the Synod Assembly or Synod Council if determined to be detrimental to the function of the office or if the special circumstances no longer apply.
- †S8.12. As this synod's pastor, the bishop shall:
- a. Preach, teach, and administer the sacraments in accord with the Confession of Faith of this church.
 - b. Have primary responsibility for the ministry of Word and Sacrament in this synod and its congregations, providing pastoral care and leadership for this synod, its congregations, its ministers of Word and Sacrament, and its ministers of Word and Service.
 - c. Exercise solely this church's power to ordain (or provide for the ordination by another synod bishop of) all approved candidates who have received and accepted a properly issued, duly attested letter of call for the office of ministry of Word and Sacrament (and as provided in the bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America).
 - d. Ordain (or provide for the ordination of) approved candidates who have received and accepted a properly issued, duly attested letter of call for service as ministers of Word and Service.
 - e. Attest letters of call for persons called to serve congregations in the synod, letters of call for persons called by the Synod Council, and letters of call for persons on the rosters of this synod called by the Church Council.
 - f. Install (or provide for the installation of) rostered ministers whose calls the bishop has attested.
 - g. Exercise leadership in the mission of this church and in so doing:
 - 1) Interpret and advocate the mission and theology of the whole church;
 - 2) Lead in fostering support for and commitment to the mission of this church within this synod;
 - 3) Coordinate the use of the resources available to this synod as it seeks to promote the health of this church's life and witness in the areas served by this synod;
 - 4) Submit a report to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly concerning the synod's life and work; and
 - 5) Advise and counsel this synod's related institutions and organizations.
 - h. Practice leadership in strengthening the unity of the Church and in so doing:
 - 1) Exercise oversight of the preaching, teaching, and administration of the sacraments within this synod in accord with the Confession of Faith of this church;

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

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

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

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

†S8.16. **Conflicts of Interest**

†S8.16.01. The following procedures shall govern matters of potential conflicts of interest for synod bishops:

- a. Whenever a synod bishop determines that a matter of the kind described in †S8.16.01.b. may require his or her determination or action with respect to a related individual as defined in †S8.16.01.c., the synod bishop shall withdraw from personal involvement in such matter and shall so notify the

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

- b. Matters include any proceedings under Chapter 20, proceedings under provision 7.46. of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* (†S14.13.), candidacy, reinstatement, and similar matters where determinations or actions by the synod bishop could change, limit, restrict, approve, authorize, or deny the related individual's ministry on one of the official rosters of this church.
- c. A related individual is one who, with respect to the synod bishop, is a spouse, parent, son, daughter, sibling, uncle, aunt, niece, nephew, grandparent, grandchild, including corresponding members of blended families and in-laws (parent, son, daughter, or sibling of a spouse, spouse of a sibling, or the parent or sibling of the spouse of a sibling).

S8.20. **Vice-President**

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

S8.22. In the event of the resignation, death, or disability of the bishop, the vice-president 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. If the vice-president is unable to fulfill this duty, or if the office of vice-president is vacant, the Synod Council shall meet and arrange for the conduct of the duties of the bishop.

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

S8.30. **Secretary**

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

†S8.32. The secretary shall:

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

S8.40. **Treasurer**

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

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

- a. Management of the monies and accounts of this synod, its deeds, mortgages, contracts, evidences of claims and revenues, and trust funds, holding the same at all times subject to the order of this synod.
- b. Investment of funds upon the authorization of the Synod Council.
- c. Receipt and acknowledgment of offerings, contributions, and bequests made to this synod, collecting interest and income from its invested funds, and paying regular appropriations and orders on the several accounts as approved and directed by the Synod Council. The treasurer shall transmit each month to the treasurer of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America the funds received by this synod for the general work of this church.
- d. Maintenance of a regular account with each congregation of this synod and informing the congregation, at least quarterly, of the status of this account.
- e. Rendering at each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly a full, detailed, and duly audited report of receipts and disbursements in the several accounts of this synod for the preceding fiscal year,

together with the tabulation, for record and publication in the minutes, of the contributions from the congregations.

- f. Giving of corporate surety in the amount determined by the Synod Council, which shall be in the custody of the secretary, and the premium therefore shall be paid by this synod. Fidelity coverage provided by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be deemed a fulfillment of this requirement.

S8.50. **General Provisions**

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

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

S8.52. The terms of the officers shall begin on the first day of the second month following election or, in special circumstances, at a time designated by the Synod Council.

†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 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. 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 may be effected in accordance with the procedure established by the Committee on Appeals of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the vacating of office may be effected for willful disregard or violation of the constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of this church; for such physical or mental disability as renders the officer incapable of performing the duties of office; or for such conduct as would subject the officer to disciplinary action as a rostered minister or as a member of a congregation of this church.

- a. Proceedings for the recall or dismissal of a synod bishop shall be instituted by written petition by:
 - 1) the Synod Council on an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of its elected members present and voting;
 - 2) the Synod Assembly on an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of its members present and voting;
 - 3) at least 10 synod bishops; or
 - 4) the presiding bishop of this church.
- b. Proceedings for the recall or dismissal of an officer of a synod, other than the synod bishop, shall be instituted by written petition by:
 - 1) the Synod Council on an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of its elected members present and voting;
 - 2) the Synod Assembly on an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of its members present and voting; or
 - 3) the synod bishop.

- c. The petition shall be filed with the chair of the Committee on Appeals (in care of the secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 8765 West Higgins Road, Chicago, Illinois 60631) and shall set forth the specific charge or charges.
- d. Upon the filing of a written petition, the Executive Committee of the Synod Council may temporarily suspend the officer from service in the synod without prejudice, but with continuation of compensation, including benefits, if the officer is a salaried employee of the synod.
- e. In the case of alleged physical or mental incapacity of an officer of the synod, the procedures outlined in †S8.56. shall be followed, and such officer shall comply with the decision of the Synod Council. If such officer fails or refuses to comply, the Synod Council may proceed to petition for recall or dismissal as follows:
 - 1) the Synod Council will submit a written report of their findings and the basis of their decision to the Committee on Appeals.
 - 2) the Committee on Appeals, other than those who are disqualified, shall review the findings and decision of the Synod Council and by an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of those present and voting may adopt the findings and grant the petition.
- f. If the synod officer is a minister of Word and Sacrament, grounds for recall or dismissal include those set forth in ELCA bylaw 20.22.01. and as defined under the process described in ELCA constitutional provisions 20.21. and 20.22. as grounds for discipline. If the officer is a minister of Word and Service, grounds for recall or dismissal include those set forth in ELCA bylaw 20.23.01. and as defined under the process described in ELCA constitutional provisions 20.21. and 20.22. as grounds for discipline.
- g. If the officer is a layperson, grounds for recall or dismissal include those set forth in ELCA bylaw 20.41.01. as grounds for discipline.
- h. If the case of alleged willful disregard or violation of the constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions or of alleged conduct as would subject the officer to disciplinary action, the following procedures shall apply:
 - 1) the petition shall be referred to the Committee on Appeals, which shall function as the discipline hearing committee that shall conduct a hearing in accordance with the rules provided for in ELCA bylaw 20.22.14. except to the extent that those rules are in conflict with the provisions of this bylaw; and
 - 2) the members of the Committee on Appeals, other than those who are disqualified, may grant the petition by an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of those present and voting.
- i. Written notice of a decision by the Committee on Appeals that the charges have been sustained shall be given to the affected officer and to the Synod Council, and the office shall be vacated.

†S8.58. If the bishop is to be temporarily absent from the synod for an extended period, the bishop, with the consent of the Synod Council, may appoint as acting bishop for such period a minister of Word and Sacrament of this church. Except as limited by action of the Synod Council, an acting bishop shall possess all of the powers and authority of a regularly elected bishop other than authority to ordain or to authorize the ordination of properly approved candidates for ordination.

Chapter 9 NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

†S9.01. The Synod Assembly shall elect such officers of this synod and such other persons as the constitution and bylaws may require, according to procedures set forth in the bylaws. The Synod Assembly shall elect members of the Churchwide Assembly in accordance with bylaw 12.41.11. of the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

S9.01.01. Voting members of the Churchwide Assembly shall be elected by the Synod Assembly in the following manner:

- a. The bishop shall automatically be a member, in accordance with ELCA Constitution 12.41.11.
- b. The Vice President shall automatically be a member.
- c. The Assembly shall elect three ordained ministers on the roster of this synod, three lay males and three lay females to serve as Churchwide Voting Members. Preliminary nominations for these positions will be made by the conferences. The particular nominations to be made by each conference (Clergy, Lay Male, Lay Female) shall be determined in the year prior to the election by means of a lottery conducted by the Synod Council Executive Committee. Two nominees for each position selected by the Conference shall be presented to the Synod Assembly; no additional

nominations shall be permitted. The Assembly shall elect one person for each position to serve as a member of the Churchwide Assembly. A member who subsequently moves out of the Conference from which they were elected shall continue to hold office until the next election, provided they continue to hold membership in a congregation of this synod.

- d. Additional members-at-large sufficient to complete the assigned delegation number shall be elected from nominations made by the Nominating Committee, with further nominations from the floor permitted. The election of the at-large members, if necessary, shall take place after the elections of the members from the conferences have been completed. In the event that the number of Churchwide Assembly members assigned to the Synod precludes electing nine persons described above, the Synod Council shall determine how best to distribute the members to be elected.
- e. The runner-up in each election shall be the first alternate for the seat. In the event the elected voting member or alternate is unable to serve, the Synod Council or Executive Committee shall appoint additional alternates as necessary.

- S9.01.02. The Synod Council may recommend to the Assembly any alterations in the procedure of SB9.01.01 made necessary by the number of members of the Churchwide Assembly assigned to this synod.
- †S9.02. In all elections by the Synod Assembly, other than for the bishop, a majority of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election.
- S9.03. There shall be a Nominating Committee consisting of nine members, appointed by the Synod Council in three classes for three-year terms. The new class shall take office at the close of the regular meeting of the Synod Assembly (or July 1, should the Synod Assembly not hold a regular meeting that year). The Synod Council shall designate a convener for the Committee, which shall elect its own chair. Additional nominations may be made from the floor for all elections.
- S9.03.01. The Nominating Committee shall monitor the progress and make recommendations about the place of elections in achieving the goal of †S6.04.
- S9.03.02. The Nominating Committee, in consultation with the Conference Cabinets and other appropriate groups, shall present nominations for Synod officials (except as otherwise provided), including at-large members of the Council and Synod Churchwide Assembly delegates, and other positions as the Synod Council may designate.
- S9.03.03. The members of the Nominating Committee shall be limited to two consecutive terms of three years each.
- S9.04. The bishop shall be elected by the Synod Assembly by ecclesiastical ballot. Three-quarters of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election on the first ballot. If no one is elected, the first ballot shall be considered the nominating ballot. The second ballot shall list all persons who received legal votes on the first ballot, except for those who have asked that their names not be included for further consideration in the election process by notifying the Chair of the Elections Committee within two hours of the announcement of the results of the first ballot. Three-fourths of the legal votes cast on the second ballot shall be necessary for election. The third ballot shall be limited to the seven persons (plus ties) who received the greatest number of legal votes on the second ballot, and two-thirds of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. The fourth ballot shall be limited to the three persons (plus ties) who receive the greatest number of legal votes on the third ballot, and 60 percent of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. On subsequent ballots a majority of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. These ballots shall be limited to the two persons (plus ties) who receive the greatest number of legal votes on the previous ballot.
- S9.04.01. In the year prior to an election for bishop, the Nominating Committee shall establish a process for providing this synod with information about potential candidates for bishop. The process shall be reviewed and approved by the Synod Council prior to its beginning, and shall include the following elements:
 - a. Each Conference within this synod shall be invited to suggest names of those eligible persons on the clergy roster of the ELCA whom they believe to have the gifts and graces necessary for holding the office of bishop. Each conference shall submit no more than five names, no later than January 15 (or another date approved by the Synod Council). The name of each person submitted, together with the conference or conferences which submitted that name, shall be made known by the Nominating Committee to each person whose name has been submitted, as well as to the congregations and rostered professionals of the synod, through any appropriate media. Each conference may make its own decision as to the process it uses to determine the names it will submit, but that process shall include an opportunity for congregations and individuals within the conference to suggest names for consideration.
 - b. Persons so suggested shall be invited to submit brief biographical material, and to respond to questions regarding their view of the office of bishop and its role in the mission of the church. The specific questions asked shall be approved by the Synod Council.

- c. The responses to this invitation shall be distributed to members of the Assembly along with the pre-assembly reports. They shall also be posted on the Synod’s website.
 - d. Any persons receiving votes on the first ballot who did not previously submit written material shall be invited to do so immediately, and those responses shall be duplicated and made available to the voting members of the Assembly.
- S9.04.02. When the Synod Assembly begins the process of balloting for bishop, that process shall take priority over all other business.
- S9.05. The Nominating Committee shall nominate at least one person for vice president; additional nominations may be made from the floor.
- S9.06. The Synod Council shall nominate at least one person for secretary; additional nominations may be made from the floor.
- S9.07. If the treasurer is elected, the Synod Council shall nominate at least one person for treasurer; additional nominations may be made from the floor.
- S9.08. In all elections, except for the election of the bishop, the names of the persons receiving the highest number of legal votes, but not elected by a majority of the legal votes cast on a preceding ballot, shall be entered on the next ballot to the number of two for each vacancy unfilled. On any ballot when only two names appear, a majority of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election.
- S9.09. 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.
- †S9.12. Background checks and screening shall be required and completed for persons nominated as synod officers prior to their election, if possible, or as soon as practical after their election. The specific procedures and timing of background checks and screening shall be determined by the Synod Council.
- S9.12.A19. *The Synod Council Executive Committee shall provide for background checks for persons nominated for synod office prior to the Synod Assembly at which the election will take place or as soon as possible after the Synod Assembly for newly elected officers nominated from the floor who were not identified as nominees prior to the Assembly. The process shall be as follows:*
- a. *Prior to the Synod Assembly appropriate notice of the background check requirement and protocol will be provided to voting members, potential nominees, and others as directed by the Synod Council.*
 - b. *Nominees and newly elected officers are required to provide written consent to a background check and all information necessary to complete a background check, which should be completed prior to the Synod Assembly with respect to nominees and prior to assuming office for newly elected officers, if possible.*
 - c. *The Synod Council’s Executive Committee shall designate one Executive Committee or Synod Council member to obtain the background checks.*
 - d. *Any member of the Synod Council Executive Committee or the synod staff who intends to stand for election shall not participate in any of this background check and screening process (except as a nominee). Any person who is an immediate family member of a nominee for election shall not be part of the process.*
 - e. *All background checks for nominees and newly elected officers will entail a criminal background check. A financial background check will be completed for nominees for treasurer and bishop. The Executive Committee shall decide whether additional types of background checks are appropriate for each officer position.*
 - f. *The background check results shall be provided to that nominee or elected officer and to the Synod Council’s Executive Committee, which shall then take action as deemed appropriate. Further disclosure of the results may be determined by the Executive Committee.*
 - g. *The Executive Committee may adopt other procedures or protocols as are necessary to provide for background checks for nominees and newly elected synod officers and shall report such actions to 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 from this synod, 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 member, shall be three years.

S10.01.A16. *The Synod Council shall consist of the four officers of this synod, nine members elected from the conferences, three members elected at-large, one member who is a person of color, one member whose primary language is other than English, one young adult member, and one youth member. Each nominee to represent a Conference shall be a voting member of a congregation in that Conference. The officers, members-at-large, person of color, person whose primary language is other than English, young adult, and youth positions on the Synod Council will be elected on an at-large basis at the Synod Assembly. Unless otherwise provided by the constitution and bylaws, those to be elected at-large will be chosen from among nominations made by the Nominating Committee and annual conference gatherings, and nominations from the floor of the Synod Assembly.*

S10.01.B16. *The Synod Assembly shall elect to the Council three ministers on the roster of this Synod, three lay women, and three lay men. These Council members shall be elected for three-year terms. Nominations for these positions will be made by the conferences in the following manner: Each of the nine shall conferences will be represented on the Synod Council. The “classes” of those elected (Lay Woman, Lay Man, and Rostered Minister) would be rotated in a twelve-year cycle.*

2021		
<i>Conferences 1,4,7</i>	<i>Conference 2, 5, 8</i>	<i>Conference 3, 6, 9</i>
<i>Lay Woman</i>	<i>Lay Man</i>	<i>Rostered Minister</i>
2024 & 2027		
<i>Conferences 1,4,7</i>	<i>Conference 2, 5, 8</i>	<i>Conference 3, 6, 9</i>
<i>Lay Man</i>	<i>Rostered Minister</i>	<i>Lay Woman</i>
2030 & 2033		
<i>Conferences 1,4,7</i>	<i>Conference 2, 5, 8</i>	<i>Conference 3, 6, 9</i>
<i>Rostered Minister</i>	<i>Lay Woman</i>	<i>Lay Man</i>

Cycle Repeats beginning in 2036

Each Conference shall select two persons as nominees presented to the Synod Assembly; no additional nominations shall be permitted. The Assembly shall elect one of the two nominees of each Conference to serve on the Synod Council. A member elected as a representative of a Conference who subsequently moves out may continue to hold office until the end of that term, provided they continue to meet all other qualifications for office.

S10.01.C16. *The Sierra Pacific Synod Youth Committee shall nominate at least one person as Youth member to be elected by the Synod Assembly for a two-year term. Additional nominations may come from the Nominating Committee, conference gatherings, or floor of the Synod Assembly. Each conference gathering may nominate one person; and nominations shall take into consideration the need to ensure diversity and representational principles in elected leadership. In accordance with ¶S6.04.02., 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.*

S10.01.D16. *The three members-at-large shall be elected from nominations made by the Nominating Committee, by conference gatherings, or from the floor of the Synod Assembly. Each conference gathering may nominate one person; and nominations shall take into consideration the need to ensure diversity and representational principles in elected leadership. Members-at-large shall be elected for three-year terms, arranged in three classes so that one at-large position is elected each year. The election of the at-large Council member at each Assembly shall take place after the elections for any other Council positions are completed.*

S10.01.A18. *One young adult member shall be elected by the Synod Assembly for a three-year term from nominations made by the Nominating Committee, by conference gatherings, or from the floor of the Synod Assembly. Each conference gathering may nominate one person; and nominations shall take into consideration the need to*

ensure diversity and representational principles in elected leadership. In accordance with †S6.04.02., the term “young adult” means a voting member of a congregation of this synod between the ages of 18 and 30 at the time of election or appointment for service. Should elections to Conference positions occur in the same year as the election of the young adult member, the election of the young adult Council member shall take place after elections to Conference positions.

- S10.01.A21. *One person of color shall be elected by the Synod Assembly for a three-year term from nominations made by the Nominating Committee, by conference gatherings, or from the floor of the Synod Assembly. Each conference gathering may nominate one person; and nominations shall take into consideration the need to ensure diversity and representational principles in elected leadership. Should elections to Conference positions occur in the same year, the election of this position shall take place after elections to Conference positions.*
- S10.01.B21. *One person whose primary language is other than English shall be elected by the Synod Assembly for a three-year term from nominations made by the Nominating Committee, by conference gatherings, or from the floor of the Synod Assembly. Each conference gathering may nominate one person; and nominations shall take into consideration the need to ensure diversity and representational principles in elected leadership. Should elections to Conference positions occur in the same year, the election of this position shall take place after elections to Conference positions.*
- S10.01.01. In the election of Council members, all relevant provisions of Chapters 9 and 10 of the Synod Constitution shall apply.
- S10.01.02. Unless otherwise provided, Council members may serve no more than two consecutive terms. A partial term of two years or less shall not be considered in applying this restriction.
- S10.01.03. Unless otherwise provided, a vacancy on the Council shall be filled by the Council itself. A person elected by the Council to fill a vacancy shall serve until the completion of the unexpired term, and may be re-elected under the provisions of S10.01.02. Persons so elected shall meet the qualifications for the position they are filling.
- S10.01.04. Council members shall take office upon the adjournment of the Assembly at which they are elected. If elected by the Council to fill a vacancy, a Council member shall take office immediately upon election.
- S10.01.05. The Council shall meet at least four times each year.
- S10.01.06. Unless otherwise specified in the Synod Constitution or Bylaws, the Council shall determine its own organization and may establish any committees necessary to do its work.
- S10.01.07. A majority of the members of the Synod Council shall constitute a quorum.
- S10.01.08. *Robert's Rules of Order*, latest edition, shall govern parliamentary procedure of the Synod Council.
- S10.01.09. Any action required or permitted to be taken by the Synod Council may be taken without a meeting, if all members of the Council shall individually or collectively consent in writing to such action. Such written consent or consents shall be filed with the minutes of the Council. Such action by written consent shall have the same force and effect as the unanimous vote of the members of the Council. Any certificate or other document which relates to action so taken shall state that the action was taken by unanimous written consent of the Synod Council without a meeting and that the Bylaws of this corporation authorize the members of the Synod Council to so act.
- S10.01.10. The Synod Council shall elect or appoint from its members one person to serve with the bishop (or his/her appointee) on the Region 2 Steering Committee.
- †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 which are not in conflict with actions taken by the Synod Assembly or which 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 ELCA, 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 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.
- i. Arrange to have an annual audit of synod financial records conducted by a certified public accountant firm and submit the audited annual financial report to the Synod Assembly and to the churchwide Office of the Treasurer.
- j. Elect members of synod boards, committees, or other organizational units unless otherwise specified in the bylaws.
- k. Elect members of boards of affiliated institutions and agencies unless otherwise specified in the institution or agency bylaws or the bylaws of this synod.
- l. Receive, review, and approve amendments to the constitutions of congregations of this synod, in accordance with provisions of those constitutions and the provisions of the ELCA.
- m. Incur indebtedness, for terms not to exceed five years, when necessary to fund short-term needs of existing programs previously adopted by the Synod Assembly. The terms and amount of each such indebtedness shall be entered on the minutes of the Council and reported to each meeting of the Synod Assembly. The note or obligation given for such indebtedness, signed by the bishop and the secretary, shall be binding on this synod.

- S10.04. Any proposal to appropriate funds 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, except that amendments to the proposed budget which do not change the budget total may be approved by a simple majority of the Synod Assembly.
- S10.05. No elected member of the Synod Council shall receive compensation for such service. Synod Council members shall be entitled to reimbursement for approved expenses incurred in the exercise of their responsibilities as Council members.
- 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.
- S10.07.02. No officer or member of the Synod Council shall, during their term of office, serve as a member of the Board of Directors of any agency affiliated with the Synod under the provisions of Chapter 19 of this constitution, except as otherwise provided by this constitution or by the governing documents of said agency.
- S10.08. *Robert's Rules of Order*, latest edition, shall govern parliamentary procedure of all meetings of the Synod Council.
- S10.08.01. To the extent permitted by state law, meetings of the Synod Council and its committees may be held electronically or by telephone conference, and notice of all meetings may be provided electronically.

Chapter 11 COMMITTEES, DIVISIONS, AND COMMISSIONS

- †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. There shall be an Executive Committee, which shall consist of the officers of this synod and three other Council members, elected annually by the Council. The Executive Committee shall perform those functions of the Council assigned to it by the Council. Minutes of all Executive Committee meetings shall be distributed to the full Council. The Executive Committee shall determine its own organization.
- S11.01.02. There shall be a Committee on the Synod Assembly, which shall have responsibility for planning and organizing sessions of the Synod Assembly, including program, business, entertainment, worship, registration procedures, and any other matters relating to the meetings of the Synod Assembly. The Committee shall be composed of two members of the Synod Council; such members of the synod staff as may be appointed by the bishop; and four additional persons appointed by the Council to three-year staggered terms. Attention shall be given to the provisions of †S6.04. During the year preceding the Synod Assembly, this Committee

may appoint to its membership additional people from the city area where the Synod Assembly will be meeting. The chairperson of the Committee on the Synod Assembly shall be designated by the Synod Council. The date, place, time, registration fees, delegate formula, and agenda of each Assembly shall be recommended to the Synod Council, to which the Committee shall be responsible.

- S11.01.03. There shall be a Committee on Synod Documents, composed of the secretary of this synod and five other members appointed by the Synod Council for staggered three-year terms. The Committee shall choose its own chair and such other officers as it may deem necessary. The Committee's responsibilities shall include ongoing review of the Constitution, Bylaws, and such other Rules of Procedure as this synod may adopt; editing of those documents for clarity and consistency; assisting the Council or other groups within this synod in preparing legislation for Synod consideration; and such other related tasks that the Council or Assembly may assign to it.
- S11.01.04. There shall be a Finance Committee, which shall consist of the synod treasurer and five other persons who are voting members of congregations of this synod, who may be members of the Synod Council, and who are appointed annually by the Synod Council to staggered three-year terms. The Finance Committee shall:
- a. Assist the treasurer in the development of policies governing the management and investment of the financial assets of this synod.
 - b. Develop and recommend to the Synod Council the operating budget of this synod, including estimates of income and expense for all the parts of this synod's ministry, and present its budget recommendation to the Council at least three months before the Synod Assembly that will consider the budget for adoption. Preparation of the Committee's recommendation to the Council shall include opportunities for participation by the conferences, by the institutions and agencies related to this synod, by the church-wide agencies, and by each organizational unit that will carry out parts of the program to be recommended to the Synod Assembly.
 - c. Prepare and recommend a spending plan to the Synod Council in the first quarter of each fiscal year. The spending plan shall propose means to accomplish the financial program adopted by the Synod Assembly in the light of the most recent estimates of Synod income.
 - d. Provide continuing review of this synod's program of casualty insurance and make timely recommendations for changes in insurance coverage to the Synod Council.
- S11.01.A02. *The Synod Treasurer shall be the chairperson of the Finance Committee.*
- S11.01.05. The Mutual Ministry Committee shall be composed of six members, who shall serve a term of six years, concurrent with that of the bishop. One ordained minister on the roster of this synod, one lay man, and one lay woman shall be appointed by the bishop and confirmed by the Synod Council. One ordained minister on the roster of this synod, one lay man, and one lay woman shall be elected by the Synod Council after approval by the bishop. The committee shall choose its own chair and meet at least twice a year; it shall meet additionally at the call of the bishop. The Committee shall:
- a. provide support and counsel to the bishop.
 - b. annually review and evaluate the ministry of the bishop, and share with the bishop a summary of their evaluation. This evaluation shall remain confidential.
- S11.01.06. A Council of Deans, including the dean from each conference of this synod, shall serve as an advisory resource for the bishop. The deans are available to the bishop, at the bishop's request, for advice and counsel regarding such concerns as clergy awaiting call, congregations without pastor, congregations in the call process, and the general pastoral care of clergy and congregation.
- S11.01.07. There shall be a Committee on Archives and History, composed of three members appointed by the Synod Council for staggered three-year terms; the Archivist of the Synod (who shall be appointed by the Bishop), the Secretary of the Synod, and the Curator of the Region 2 Archives shall be *ex officio* members of the Committee. The Committee shall have the following responsibilities:
- a. Work with the ELCA's designated Region 2 archives to ensure that all significant archival material is collected and preserved.
 - b. Encourage and promote adequate archival and historical activity in the congregations of the synod.
 - c. Cooperate with the Lutheran History Center of the West and other societies concerned about the history of Lutheranism in the West.
 - d. Perform such other tasks as may be assigned by the Synod.
- †S11.02. The Consultation Committee of this synod shall consist of at least 6 persons and not more than 12 persons, of whom half shall be ministers of Word and Sacrament and half shall be lay persons, who shall each be elected by the Synod Assembly for a term of six years without consecutive reelection. 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. There shall be a Consultation Committee consisting of 8 persons-who shall be nominated by the bishop and elected by the Synod Assembly. The bishop shall be a member of the committee ex officio except in instances where the bishop brings charges against an ordained minister. The Consultation Committee's responsibilities and procedures shall be those listed in ELCA Bylaw 20.21.05.
- †S11.03. The Committee on Discipline in this synod shall consist of 12 persons of whom six shall be ministers of Word and Sacrament and six shall be lay persons, 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.
- S11.03.01. Members of the Committee on Discipline shall be nominated by the bishop and elected by the Synod Assembly. Each biennium the Synod Council shall appoint the chair of the committee
- †S11.04. The Mutual Ministry Committee shall be appointed by the Executive Committee of the Synod Council to provide support and counsel to the bishop.
- †S11.05. The Audit Committee of this synod shall consist of three to six persons, none of whom is a member of the synod staff. Up to half of the committee members may be Synod Council members. The Audit Committee members shall be elected by the Synod Council for a term of three years and be eligible for re-election to a second consecutive three-year term. The terms of the Audit Committee members shall be staggered. The Audit Committee shall be responsible for assisting the Synod Council in fulfilling its general oversight of the synod's accounting, financial reporting, internal control systems, and external audit processes as provided in †S15.31.
- S11.06. The Committee on Candidacy of this Synod shall have the functions and responsibilities specified in the appropriate ELCA documents. The Committee shall consist of the following members:
- a. One member of the Synod Council, appointed annually by the Council;
 - b. The Bishop of the Sierra Pacific Synod;
 - c. One additional staff member appointed by the Bishop;
 - d. One representative of Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, appointed by the Seminary;
 - e. Fifteen members appointed by the Synod Council, organized in three approximately equal classes and serving terms of three years. Persons appointed in this way shall serve no more than three consecutive terms, but a partial term of two years or less shall not be counted as a term for the purposes of this provision. Appointments by the Council shall be made from nominations from the Nominating Committee. Terms shall expire December 31st of the stated year. Attention shall be given to the provisions of †S6.04.
- S11.07. The committees and other organizational units of this synod shall be formed under the guidance of †S6.04. With the exception of ordained ministers on the roster of this synod who reside outside the territory of this synod, each member of a committee of this synod, or any other organizational unit created by this synod, shall be a voting member of a congregation of this synod.
- S11.07.01. Except as otherwise provided by the Constitution and bylaws of this synod, no member of the Synod Council and no person employed by the Synod shall be a voting member of any Discipling Team or Committee of this Synod.
- S11.07.A99. *Except as otherwise provided by the Constitution, bylaws and continuing resolutions of this synod, the regular terms of service of members of committees and other organizational units of this synod shall end at the conclusion of the Synod Assembly in the final calendar year of the member's term.*
- S11.08. This Synod shall develop an organizational structure to carry out the mission of this synod which shall be described in the bylaws. The Synod Council shall review the actions of all organizational units so described.
- S11.08.A11. *A total of seven to nine persons shall constitute a Discipling Team. There will be seven Discipling Teams with the possibility of additional teams to be established in the future as needs arise.*
- S11.08.B11. *The Synod Council shall appoint members to each Discipling Team from the following list of nominees:*
- a. *Three to five members nominated by the Nominating Committee*
 - b. *One Dean as nominated by the Conference of Deans*
 - c. *One member nominated by the Racial and Ethnic Ministries Working Group*
 - d. *One member of the Synod Council*
 - e. *One member to serve as chair*
- S11.08.C11. *Each member of a Discipling Team shall be a member of a congregation within the synod, and shall serve for a term of three years, except the Dean, the Synod Council member and the Chair. Terms shall be staggered by the Synod Council and arranged so that approximately one-third of the terms expire each year. Team*

members shall serve no more than two consecutive terms; a partial term of less than two years shall not be considered a term for the purposes of this provision. The names of all committee members, as well as their designated terms of office, shall be reported by the Discipling Team chair to the Synod Secretary.

S11.08.D11.

The terms of the Dean, Synod Council member and Chair shall be one-year renewable terms.

S11.08.E11.

Each Discipling Team shall meet at least two times each year.

S11.08.F11.

Each Discipling Team shall be responsible to the Synod Assembly and shall report to the Synod Council in the interim.

S11.08.G11.

The Word Team shall be responsible for leading and assisting congregations and individuals in spiritual growth through study and personal application of scripture.

S11.08.H11.

The Witness Team shall be responsible for leading and assisting congregations and individuals in public affirmation of faith through word and deed.

S11.08.I11.

The Leadership Team shall be responsible for supporting and nurturing pastors, associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers on the rosters of this synod and identifying and encouraging qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel.

S11.08.J11.

The Sacrament Team shall be responsible for assisting congregations in equipping believers for baptismal life.

S11.08.K11.

The Service Team shall be responsible for leading and assisting congregations and individuals for action in the arenas of advocacy and social ministry.

S11.08.A12.

The Stewardship Discipling Team shall be responsible for leading and assisting congregations in growing faithful stewards of God's gifts of time, talents and resources.

S11.08.B12.

The Racial and Ethnic Ministries Discipling Team shall be responsible for assisting congregations and individuals in ways of dismantling racism and growing in cross cultural experience, knowledge and hospitality.

Chapter 12

CONFERENCES, CLUSTERS AND COALITIONS, OR OTHER AREA SUBDIVISIONS

†S12.01.

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

S12.01.B12.

This synod shall establish conferences within its territory. Conference division shall take into account political and geographical factors. They shall be approximately equal in number of congregations and baptized members and be easily grouped into five approximately equal electoral districts. A congregation may petition the Synod Council to change the conference to which it is assigned; such a change takes effect immediately after approval by the Synod Council and shall be reported to the next Synod Assembly. The Synod Council shall maintain a current roster of conference alignments.

S12.01.A98.

The following procedure shall be followed when a congregation considers petitioning to change conference assignments:

1. *The congregation seeking a change in its conference alignment will consult with:
 - a. *other ELCA congregations in its immediate area;*
 - b. *the two conferences involved;*
 - c. *the Synod's Witness and Service Discipling Team; and*
 - d. *the Bishop's Office.**
2. *If, after the above consultation, the congregation decides to proceed with its petition, it is, according to the synod's bylaws, free to do so. The petition shall include a rationale for the change of conference affiliation, based on fulfillment of the purpose of the conference as expressed in S12.01.02 and the mission needs of this church, and include documentation of the consultation with the partners noted in item #1 above.*
3. *When the Synod Council receives the petition, the Council may consult with the other partners noted in item #1 above and may seek their recommendation.*
4. *The recommendation and decision will be based on what, in the best judgment of the Synod Council, will best further the mission of this church.*

S12.01.02.

The purpose of the Conferences shall be:

- a. to deliver and support synodical and churchwide programs;
- b. to develop mutually supportive clergy and congregational relationships.
- c. to develop strategy for common mission;
- d. to be a means to provide pastoral care for clergy and congregations;

- e. to be a means for expressing needs and opinions of congregations and clergy to this synod; and
- f. to nominate persons within each conference for synodical positions elected by the Assembly from the electoral districts, as specified in the bylaws.

- S12.01.03. Each conference shall hold an assembly at least annually, composed of such representation of the congregations as the conference shall determine. The annual assembly for each year shall be held at least 60 days prior to the meeting of that year's Synod Assembly. In instances where two or more conferences deem it useful, they may convene in a joint assembly, provided that any business (such as nominations or elections) requiring action by the conferences individually be handled separately by each conference's delegates.
- S12.01.04. Each conference shall elect its own officers, which shall include a Dean. The Dean shall be an ordained minister on the roster of this synod who is a member of one of the congregations of the Conference. The dean shall serve a term of three years, and may serve no more than two consecutive terms. The dean's responsibilities shall be to represent the conference on the Council of Deans; to assist the bishop in providing pastoral care to congregations and clergy of the conference; and to fulfill such other responsibilities as the bishop or Synod Assembly may assign. The dean may preside at meetings of the Conference Assembly and Cabinet.
- S12.01.05. In the event that the office of the dean should become vacant, the Conference Cabinet shall appoint an interim dean; the next session of the Conference Assembly shall elect a new dean.
- S12.01.06. There shall be a cabinet in each conference, consisting of the officers and other persons as the conference shall determine. The cabinet shall be responsible for planning the Conference Assembly and for fulfilling the purposes of the conference as listed in S12.01.02.
- S12.01.07. A coalition is a ministry of this synod implementing a strategy for mission developed by congregations, conferences or other agencies in an identified geographic area. It shall have a governing board which shall report to the Witness and Service Discipling Team of this synod. A coalition may receive funds from congregations, this synod, and/or other agencies. A coalition may employ staff, requesting the Synod Council to issue letters of call to ordained ministers and letters of appointment to associates in ministry. A coalition shall operate under constitutions and bylaws which shall be ratified by the Synod Council. Coalitions and conferences are different entities and fulfill different functions. While a coalition may include congregations as members which are all or part of one or more conferences of this synod, provisions of S12.01.03 and S12.01.04 shall be fulfilled by each conference.

Chapter 13

CONGREGATIONS

†S13.01.

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

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

confer with the congregation to assure its understanding and acceptance of commitment to and affiliation with this church.

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

- S13.01.A19. *The Synod Council of the Sierra Pacific Synod approves seasonal member voting for congregations of this synod in accordance with the provisions of *C8.02.e. in the Model Constitution for Congregations.*
- †S13.02. It shall be the responsibility of each congregation of this synod to choose from among its voting members laypersons to serve as members of the Synod Assembly as well as persons to represent it at meetings of any conference, cluster, coalition, or other area subdivision of which it is a member. The number of persons to be elected by each congregation and other qualifications shall be as prescribed in guidelines established by this synod.
- S13.11. When a rostered minister resigns, the Congregation Council shall receive the letter of resignation, report it to the congregation, and at once notify the bishop of this synod.
- S13.12. A congregation under financial obligation to its former rostered minister shall make satisfactory settlement of the obligation before calling a successor.
- †S13.20. A congregation considering a relocation shall confer with the bishop of the synod in which it is territorially located and the appropriate unit of the churchwide organization before any steps are taken leading to such action. The approval of the Synod Council shall be received before any such action is effected.
- †S13.21. A congregation considering development of an additional site to be used regularly for worship shall confer with the bishop of the synod in which it is territorially located and the appropriate unit of the churchwide organization before any steps are taken leading to such action.
- †S13.22. Each congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America within the territory of this synod, except those which are in partnership with the Slovak Zion Synod, shall establish and maintain a relationship with this synod.
- †S13.23. Provision 9.71. of the constitution of this church shall govern the relationship of this synod and a congregation of this synod regarding the property of the congregation. This synod may transfer or convey property to a congregation of the synod, subject to restrictions accepted by the congregation, including provision that if the Synod Council, in its sole and exclusive discretion, determines (1) that the property is not being used to serve the mission and ministry needs of this church, or (2) that the congregation has transferred, encumbered, mortgaged, or in any way burdened or impaired any right, title, or interest in the property without the prior approval of the Synod Council, then title to the property shall revert to the synod, and the congregation, upon written demand, shall reconvey the property to the synod.
- †S13.24. The Synod Council, itself or through trustees appointed by it, may take charge and control of the property of a congregation of this synod to hold, manage, and convey the same on behalf of this synod, if any of the following apply:
- a. The congregation has disbanded, ceased to worship, or otherwise ceased to exist as a congregation.
 - b. The congregation has abandoned its property.
 - c. The remaining members of the congregation decide that it is no longer possible to function as a congregation or that they are unable to provide required governance.
 - d. The Synod Council determines that the membership of a congregation has become so scattered or so diminished in numbers that it cannot provide required governance or that it has become impractical for the congregation to fulfill the purposes for which it was organized.
 - e. The Synod Council determines that it is necessary for this synod to protect and preserve the congregation's property from waste and deterioration.
- The congregation shall have the right to appeal any such decision to the next Synod Assembly.
- S13.25. This synod may temporarily assume administration of a congregation upon its request or with its concurrence. Such synod administration shall continue only so long as necessary to complete the purposes for which it was requested by the congregation or until the congregation withdraws consent to continued administration.
- S13.30. **Discipline**
- †S13.31. Congregations and members of congregations are subject to discipline in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 20 of the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*. The synod's involvement in and responsibility for such disciplinary processes shall be as set forth in that chapter.
- S13.40. **Synod-authorized Worshiping Communities**

Chapter 14

ROSTERED MINISTERS

†S14.10.

Ministers of Word and Sacrament

†S14.11.

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

†14.12.

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 available channels of effective communication;
 - 7) witness to the Kingdom of God in the community, in the nation and abroad; and
 - 8) speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, calling for justice and proclaiming God's love for the world.
- 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 churchwide organization and of this synod; and
 - 6) encourage adherence to covenantal relationship with this church as expressed in the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*.

S14.12.01.

Consistent with the biblical faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, every ordained minister shall seek to exemplify a life of grace, seek healing for those who suffer in body, mind or spirit and work for reconciliation and peace in the world.

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.

S14.14.

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

S14.15.

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

†S14.16.

When a congregation of this church desires to call a pastor or a candidate for the ministry of Word and Sacrament of this church:

- 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 the issuance of a letter of call to a pastor or candidate by a congregation of this synod in accordance 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 30 days of receipt of such call. In exceptional circumstances with the approval of the bishop of this synod and the president of the Congregation Council of the congregation issuing the call, an additional 15 days may be granted to respond to a letter of call.

†S14.18.

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

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

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

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

of the congregation shall attest to the bishop of this synod that such records have been placed in his or her hands in good order by a departing pastor before:

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

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

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

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

†S14.24. With the approval of the synod bishop expressed in writing, which sets forth a clear statement of the purpose to be served by such a departure from the normal rule of permanency of the call as expressed in †S14.18., a congregation may call a pastor for a specific term of years. 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 representative 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 ordinations of those persons properly called to ministry in this synod shall be authorized by the bishop of this synod.

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

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

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

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

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

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

- S14.42. No minister of Word and Service shall accept a call without first conferring with the bishop of this synod. A minister of Word and Service shall respond with an answer of acceptance or declination to a letter of call within 30 days of receipt of such call. In exceptional circumstances with the approval of the bishop of this synod and the president of the Congregation Council of the congregation issuing the call, an additional 15 days may be granted to respond to a letter of call.
- †S14.43. The provisions for termination of the mutual relationship between a minister of Word and Service and a congregation shall be as follows:
- a. The call of a congregation, when accepted by a minister of Word and Service, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment which shall be terminated only by death or, following consultation with the synod bishop, for the following reasons:
 - 1) mutual agreement to terminate the call or the completion of a call for a specific term;
 - 2) resignation of the minister of Word and Service, which shall become effective, unless otherwise agreed, no later than 30 days after the date on which it was submitted;
 - 3) inability to conduct the office effectively in that congregation in view of local conditions;
 - 4) physical disability or mental incapacity of the minister of Word and Service;
 - 5) suspension of the minister of Word and Service through discipline for more than three months;
 - 6) resignation or removal of the minister of Word and Service from the roster of ministers of Word and Service of this church;
 - 7) termination of the relationship between this church and the congregation;
 - 8) dissolution of the congregation or the termination of a parish arrangement; or
 - 9) suspension of the congregation through discipline for more than six months.
 - b. When allegations of physical disability or mental incapacity of the minister of Word and Service under paragraph a.4) above, or ineffective conduct of the ministry of Word and Service under paragraph a.3) above, have come to the attention of the bishop of this synod,
 - 1) the bishop in his or her sole discretion may investigate such conditions personally together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson, or
 - 2) when such allegations have been brought to the synod's attention by an official recital of allegations by the Congregation Council or by a petition signed by at least one-third of the voting members of the congregation, the bishop personally shall investigate such conditions together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson.
 - c. In case of alleged physical disability or mental incapacity under paragraph a.4) above, the bishop's committee shall obtain and document competent medical opinion concerning the minister of Word and Service's condition. When a disability or incapacity is evident to the committee, the bishop of this synod may declare the position vacant and the minister of Word and Service shall be listed on the roster of ministers of Word and Service with disability status. Upon removal of the disability and restoration of the minister of Word and Service to health, the bishop shall take steps to enable the minister of Word and Service to resume the ministry, either in the congregation last served or in another appropriate call.
 - d. In the case of alleged local difficulties that imperil the effective functioning of the congregation under paragraph a.3) above, the bishop's committee shall endeavor to hear from all concerned persons, after which the bishop together with the committee shall present their recommendations first to the minister of Word and Service and then to the congregation. The recommendations of the bishop's committee address whether the minister of Word and Service's call should come to an end and, if so, may suggest appropriate severance arrangements. The committee may also propose other actions that should be undertaken by the congregation and by the minister of Word and Service, if appropriate. If the minister of Word and Service and congregation agree to carry out such recommendations, no further action need be taken by the synod.
 - e. If either party fails to assent to the recommendations of the bishop's committee concerning the minister of Word and Service's call, the congregation may dismiss the minister of Word and Service only at a legally called meeting after consultation with the bishop, either (a) by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee did not recommend termination of the call, or (b) by a majority vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee recommended termination of the call.
 - f. If, in the course of proceedings described in paragraph c. or paragraph d. above, the bishop's committee concludes that there may be grounds for disciplinary action, the committee shall make

recommendations concerning disciplinary action in accordance with the provisions of this church's constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.

†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 synod bishop expressed in writing, which sets forth a clear statement of the purpose to be served by such a departure from the normal rule of permanency of the call as expressed in †S14.43., a congregation may call a minister of Word and Service for a specific term. Details of such calls shall be in writing setting forth the purpose and conditions involved. Prior to the completion of a term, the bishop of this synod or a representative of the bishop shall meet with the minister of Word and Service and representatives of the congregation for a review of the call. Such call may also be terminated before its expiration in accordance with the provisions of †S14.43.

S14.47. All ministers of Word and Service under a call shall attend meetings of the Synod Assembly, and the ministers of Word and Service of congregations shall also attend the meetings of the conference, cluster, coalition, or other area subdivision to which the congregation belongs.

Chapter 15 FINANCIAL MATTERS

†S15.01. The fiscal year of this synod shall be February 1 through January 31.

†S15.11. Since the congregations, synods, and churchwide organization are interdependent expressions that share in God's mission, all share in the responsibility to develop, implement, and strengthen the financial support of the whole church. The gifts and offerings of the members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America are given to support all parts of this church; the unity of this church should be evidenced in determining each part's share of the gifts and offerings. Therefore:

- 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.
- 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 supportive funding with other synods and the churchwide organization.

S15.13. On the basis of estimated income, the Synod Council shall authorize expenditures within the budget for the fiscal year. Expenditure authorizations shall be subject to revision, in light of changing conditions, by the Synod Council.

S15.14. Except when such procedure would jeopardize current operations, a reserve amounting to no more than 16 percent of the sum of the amounts scheduled in the next year's budget for regular distribution to synod causes shall be carried forward annually for disbursement in the following year in the interest of making possible a more even flow of income to such causes. The exact number of dollars to be held in reserve shall be determined by the Synod Council.

S15.21. No appeal to congregations of this or any other synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for the raising of funds shall be conducted by congregations or organizations related to or affiliated with this synod without the consent of the Synod Assembly or the Synod Council.

†S15.31. This synod shall arrange to have an annual audit of its financial records conducted by a certified public accountant firm recommended by the synod Audit Committee and approved by the Synod Council. The audited annual financial report shall be submitted by this synod to the churchwide Office of the Treasurer and to the congregations of this synod. The financial reports shall be in the format approved from time to time by the churchwide Office of the Treasurer.

- †S15.32. This synod shall maintain adequate, continuous insurance coverage in accordance with standards recommended by the churchwide organization. Insurance programs offered or endorsed by the churchwide organization shall be deemed to fulfill this obligation.
- S15.33. Congregations are encouraged to give priority in their benevolence giving to the synod budget. They are also encouraged to include in their annual budgets and allow for special appeals by those institutions and agencies of this synod that have been commended for support by the Synod Council.

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 synod bishop or when written charges against a congregation are made in disciplinary proceedings by the Synod Council or the synod bishop, and the discipline hearing committee determines that no discipline shall be imposed, then if such determination is not reversed or set aside on appeal, indemnification shall be made by the synod to the accused for reasonable attorney's fees and other reasonable expenses related to the defense of the charges. The determination of the reasonableness of such fees and expenses shall be decided by the Synod Council.

Chapter 17

CONSULTATION AND ADJUDICATION

- †S17.01. The synod bishop and the Executive Committee of the Synod Council shall be available to give counsel when disputes arise within this synod.
- †S17.02. The synod bishop and the Executive Committee of the Synod Council shall receive expressions of concern from rostered ministers of this church, congregations and organizations within this synod; provide a forum in which the parties concerned can seek to work out matters causing distress or conflict; and make appropriate recommendations for their resolution. When a concern relates directly to the synod bishop, the synod vice president will lead the Executive Committee's efforts at resolving the matter. When the matter at issue cannot be resolved in this manner, applicable procedures for investigation, decision, appeal, and adjudication shall be followed. Allegations or charges that could lead to discipline of a rostered minister, or a person on the official lay roster of this church shall not be addressed by the Executive Committee but shall be resolved through the disciplinary process set forth in the *Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*.

- †S17.03. When there is disagreement between or among congregations of this synod on a substantive issue that cannot be resolved by the parties, the council of an affected congregation may petition the synod bishop for a consultation after informing the other affected congregation(s) of its intent to do so. If this consultation fails to resolve the issue, the bishop shall refer the matter to the Consultation Committee of the synod, which shall undertake efforts to find an appropriate solution. If the Consultation Committee's efforts fail to resolve the issue(s), the entire matter shall be referred to the Synod Council for adjudication by whatever process the council deems necessary. The decision of the Synod Council shall be final.
- †S17.04. When conferences, clusters, coalitions, or area subdivisions of this synod have a disagreement on a substantive issue that they cannot resolve, the aggrieved party or parties may petition the synod bishop and the Executive Committee of the Synod Council requesting a consultation after informing the other affected parties of their intent to do so. In this case the decision of the Executive Committee shall prevail, except that, upon the motion of a member of the Synod Council, the decision shall be referred to the Synod Council for final action.
- †S17.10. **Adjudication in a Congregation.**
- †S17.11. When there is disagreement between or among factions within a congregation on a substantive issue which cannot be resolved by the parties, members of the congregation may petition the synod bishop for consultation after informing the president of the Congregation Council of their intent to do so. The synod bishop shall seek a timely resolution of the dispute. If the issue relates directly to the pastor, the bishop may begin the process in †S14.18.d. In all other matters, if the bishop's consultation fails to resolve the issue, the bishop shall refer the matter to the Consultation Committee of the synod, which shall undertake efforts to find an appropriate solution. If the Consultation Committee's efforts fail to resolve the dispute, the entire matter shall be referred to the Synod Council for adjudication by whatever process the council deems necessary. The Synod Council's decision shall be final.

Chapter 18 AMENDMENTS, BYLAWS, and CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS

†S18.10. Amendments to Constitution

- †S18.11. Certain sections of this constitution incorporate and record therein provisions of the constitution and bylaws of this church. If such provisions are amended by this church, 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 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 and 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. Introduced with the support of at least eighty (80) voting members and having been approved by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting at a regular meeting of the Synod Assembly, an amendment may be adopted unchanged by a two-thirds vote at the next regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.
 - 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 nor with the constitution and bylaws of this church. 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.
- S18.21.01. Proposed amendments or additions to the bylaws shall be presented by the Synod Council, or by at least fifteen members of the Assembly.

†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.
- S18.31.01. Continuing resolutions adopted by the Council or Assembly shall be reported to the congregations and pastors of the Synod through the Synod newsletter or other means within 60 days of their adoption.

Chapter 19 INSTITUTIONS, AGENCIES, AND AFFILIATED ORGANIZATIONS

- S19.01. Official organizations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America may exist in this synod to assist it in ministering to members of this synod and to all persons who can be reached with the Gospel of Christ. As outgrowths and expressions of this synod's life, affiliated organizations are subject to its oversight and direction.
- S19.02. This synod may grant affiliation to institutions, agencies, and ministries integral to its mission by a process approved by the Synod Council in consultation with the Division for Social Ministry Organizations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Through affiliation, this synod witnesses to the accountability of the institution, agency, or ministry and publicly commends it as a responsible corporate entity of the church.

