



Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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Office of the Bishop

Proposed Changes to the Constitution & Bylaws of the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod to be considered by the 2014 Synod Assembly

FAQs

Q: Why are we doing this?

A: The current Synod structure is patterned after what the ELCA had in mind when it was created in 1988. Since then, a lot of change has occurred in the way we work and in the organizational structure of the ELCA. In many ways, this is an effort to catch the Constitution and Bylaws up to the way we are working today and gives us flexibility for the future church.

Q: Do the representational principles apply?

A: Yes, that provision in the Bylaws remains intact and will apply to all Committees, Teams, and Tables.

Q: Where does the term "Table" come from?

A: The ELCA started using the term and has asked Synods to adopt it in their structure. Three Tables are suggested (Primary Mission, New and Renewing Congregations, and Stewardship and Mission Support). Pastor Steve Bouman, who currently serves as the Executive Director of the Congregational and Synodical Mission Unit of the ELCA, wrote a short book *"The Mission Table: Renewing Congregation and Community"*, explaining the concept: <http://www.christianbook.com/mission-table-renewing-congregation-and-community/stephen-bouman/9781451478129/pd/1478129?dv=c&en=google-pla&event=PLASHOP&kw=church-and-pastoral-0-20&p=1167941&gclid=CPSfjsf8rr4CFcg7OgodfFcACA>

Q: What is the difference between the Synod Council and the Primary Mission Table?

A: The ELCA has asked Synods to establish a "Table" or group that would oversee the big picture mission strategy of the synod. For us it made sense to extend the work of the Synod Council to include the responsibilities of this visioning and oversight as stated in Synod Bylaw S11.01.13.

Q. Why do we need teams and committees and what's the difference between them?

A: The intent of having these two different kinds of bodies is flexibility; there needs to be both top-down and bottom-up opportunities for participation in the Synod. Committees are longstanding bodies and allow a synod ministry priority to move forward with interested leadership. They are created by the ELCA (through



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required provisions in our governing documents) or by the Synod Council for the various purposes that the ELCA and/or the Synod need to function.

Teams are temporary functioning bodies and are generated by synodical grass roots movements from congregations in the synod. Teams allow a group of people to be formed quickly, request synod council recognition, and begin work. Once the work for which they were formed is complete, the team disbands.

Q: Who has the authority to form Committees and Teams?

A: Although the Synod Council generally has the authority to establish Committees and Teams, five Committees are required under the mandatory provisions of the Synod's Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions. They are the Executive Committee, the Consultation Committee, the Committee on Discipline, the Mutual Ministry Committee, and the Audit Committee.

Q: What happened to the Division for Outreach and Global Missions and Division for Congregational Life?

A: The Division for Outreach is now the New and Renewing Missions Table and the Division for Global Mission will be a committee of the New and Renewing Missions Table. The work of the Division for Congregational Life will now become the work of committees and teams.

Q: How is a Mutual Ministry Committee different from a Personnel Committee?

A: The Personnel Committee's function is to review and revise Synod policies and guidelines. The Mutual Ministry Committee's function is to provide support and guidance in regard to pastoral issues.

Q: What provisions of the current constitution and bylaws will not be included in the new version?

A: There were some "Offices" in the previous Constitution that were inactive and, therefore, are not specifically provided for in the proposed revisions.

Q: Some of the activities I care about don't seem to be in this new structure. What happened?

A: The Synod Council understands that people have passions about those things they care about and we want to see that continue. The purpose of revising the Constitution is so that we can do that work more fully, while remaining within the legal structure provided by our governing documents. Some of the activities now fall under the responsibility of a Table or report directly to Synod Council; some activities are better accomplished by becoming a Team and some as a Committee. Even if it isn't specifically mentioned in the Constitution, the work is still being done, and we want that to continue!