

Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod

# MINUTES of the 2016 SYNOD ASSEMBLY

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



“For the Healing of the Nations”  
Saturday, June 18, 2016  
Good Shepherd Lutheran Church –  
Gaithersburg, Maryland

*The following are the minutes of the 2016 Synod Assembly of the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.*

*The 2016 Synod Assembly met on June 18, 2016, at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Gaithersburg, Maryland.*

*The minutes were prepared in the current form by the Secretary of the Synod and the Synod staff, reviewed by the Synod Council, and recommended for approval by the 2017 Synod Assembly.*

Kevin D. Anderson  
*Secretary of the Synod*

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**MINUTES OF THE 2016 SYNOD ASSEMBLY  
METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON, D.C. SYNOD  
OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA  
SATURDAY, JUNE 18, 2016  
GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN CHURCH - GAITHERSBURG, MARYLAND**

**Introductory Activity**

Prior to the opening of the Synod Assembly, a Synod Council meeting was held. Katharyn Wheeler organized Registration. An Orientation for New Voting Members was conducted by Richard Ahlberg, Synod Assembly Parliamentarian. Training was also conducted for Worship Assistants in advance of the Festive Eucharist.

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**PLENARY SESSION 1  
Saturday, June 18, 2016  
Good Shepherd Lutheran Church  
Gaithersburg, Maryland**

**Opening of Assembly**

Bishop Richard H. Graham called the Assembly to order at 10:06 AM.

**Report of the Registrar**

Present:	Lay Voting Members	148
	Rostered Voting Members	<u>97</u>
	<b>Total Voting Members</b>	<b>245</b>
	Visitors	19

Moved:  
Seconded: To seat the Voting Members.

VOTED  
SA16.06.01 To adopt the foregoing motion.

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**Synod Assembly Agenda, Rules of Procedure, and Absences**

Following the seating of the voting members, Bishop Graham brought forth three items for adoption and approval as a single motion: the approval of the agenda for the Synod Assembly, the adoption of the 2016 Synod Assembly Rules of Procedure, and the approval of excused absences from among the rostered leaders.

## **Rules of Procedure**

01. *To the extent consistent with the following rules of procedure, Robert's Rules of Order, latest edition, shall govern.*

### **Voice and vote**

02. *All persons under call, on leave from call, and retired on the roster of this Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod, in attendance at this assembly, shall have voice and vote at the proceedings of this assembly. All interim pastors serving congregations of this synod, at the time of the assembly, shall have voice and vote.*
03. *Alternate lay members shall be seated if the regular lay members are unable to serve.*
04. *Persons giving reports during this assembly's proceedings who are not members shall be given voice, no vote, during that portion of the assembly.*
05. *The parliamentarian appointed by the Synod Council shall be given voice, no vote (unless a member) during the proceedings of this assembly.*
06. *The Presiding Bishop, or his or her representative(s), and ecumenical representatives shall be given voice, no vote during the proceedings of this assembly.*
07. *Duly elected and serving members of the Synod Council shall have both voice and vote at the synod assembly, in accordance with S7.28 of the constitution of the synod.*

### **Quorum**

08. *One-half (1/2) of the members of the Synod Assembly shall constitute a quorum.*

### **Proxy**

09. *Proxy and absentee voting shall not be permitted in the transaction of any business of this synod.*

### **Items of Business**

10. *With the consent of this assembly, the chair shall have the authority to call items of business before the assembly in whatever order is deemed by the chair most expedient for the conduct of assembly business. The chair shall limit discussions to items germane to the issues before the assembly.*

### **Resolutions**

11. *Resolutions to be considered by the assembly shall be submitted in writing to the Secretary of the Synod. In order to assure the resolution going to the floor of this assembly, such resolutions shall be submitted to the Secretary of the Synod prior to the promulgated deadline, which shall not be less than 30 days prior to the beginning of the assembly. The Secretary shall refer them to the Committee on Reference and Counsel. The Committee shall report to this assembly with its*

*recommendations regarding the resolutions submitted, which shall constitute a motion to the floor of this assembly.*

12. *Any resolutions submitted after this date are not guaranteed a place on the agenda and must receive a two-thirds vote in order to be heard. Any resolution not receiving a two-thirds vote will be referred to the Synod Council for disposition.*
13. *Multimedia presentations will not be part of floor debate on resolutions.*

### **Motions**

14. *All main motions, to be made, shall be in writing and presented to the Secretary of the Synod immediately (Constitution and Bylaw amendments require five (5) signatures of members).*
15. *A member who has spoken on the pending question(s) may not move the previous question(s).*
16. *A motion to end debate by moving the previous question shall apply only to the immediately preceding motion. A motion to end debate on all matters on the floor or more than the immediately preceding question is not in order.*
17. *When a substitute motion is made, secondary amendments may be offered first to the original motion. After all secondary amendments to the original motion have been disposed of, secondary amendments to the substitute motion may be offered. When all amendments to the substitute motion have been disposed of, the vote shall be taken on whether the substitute motion is to be substituted as the original motion or be rejected.*
18. *Debate shall be limited to two (2) minutes per person, per speech.*

### **Elections**

19. *Ballots shall be accepted only from those members who are seated within designated areas of the assembly hall.*
20. *Nominations from the floor shall be accompanied by the copy-ready vita and the consent of the person to be nominated, both to be submitted to the secretary at the time of the nomination.*

### **Minutes**

21. *Minutes of this assembly shall be available for review by the Synod Council by the September 30 immediately following the assembly.*

### **Applications for Displays**

22. *Due to space constraints, displays will not be permitted at the 2016 Synod Assembly.*
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Excused Absences of Rostered Leaders

The Rev. Dean W. Anderson  
The Rev. Roger Berner  
The Rev. Anne Dwiggin  
The Rev. Gregory Gaertner  
The Rev. Charles Hodges  
The Rev. Gordon Lathrop  
The Rev. Connie Miller  
The Rev. Mark Olsen  
The Rev. Wayne Ralston  
The Rev. Lowell Schuetze  
The Rev. Glen A. Sea  
The Rev. Albert Swingle

The Rev. Myron Barbour  
The Rev. Mark Brown  
The Rev. Catherine Feil  
The Rev. Phillip Gaines  
The Rev. Robert Holum  
The Rev. Daniel Martensen  
The Rev. Elijah Mwitanti  
The Rev. Ronald Qualley  
Harold Sargeant, AIM  
The Rev. George Schwantes  
The Rev. David Sonnenberg

Moved:

Seconded: To approve the agenda for the Synod Assembly as set forth in Section 1.2 of the meeting materials for the Assembly, the Rules of Procedure as set forth above, and the excused absences as set forth above.

VOTED

SA16.06.02 To adopt the foregoing motion.

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**Approval of Minutes of 2015 Synod Assembly**

Moved:

Seconded: To approve the minutes of the 2015 Synod Assembly as set forth in Section 9.1 of the meeting materials for the Assembly.

VOTED

SA16.06.03 To adopt the foregoing motion.

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**Introduction of Front Table**

Bishop Graham introduced the individuals seated at the front table facing the Assembly, as follows:

Kevin D. Anderson, Secretary  
The Rev. Philip Hirsch, Assistant to the Bishop and Director for Evangelical Mission  
Dr. John White, Vice President  
Richard Ahlberg, Parliamentarian  
The Rev. Amy Thompson Sevimli, Assistant to the Bishop

### **First Racial Equity Team Video**

Bishop Graham recognized members of the congregation of All Saints Lutheran Church, Bowie, Maryland, and introduced a video from the Racial Equity Team featuring members of the congregation, entitled “JUST gRACE.”

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### **Recognition of Ecumenical Guests**

Bishop Graham introduced four ecumenical guests: Bishop Barry Knestout, auxiliary bishop, the Archdiocese of Washington; the Rev. Dr. Olaf Wassmuth, pastor, German Lutheran Church of Washington, D.C.; the Rev. David Bennett, president, Eastern District Moravian Church; and the Rev. Robin Dodge, ecumenical officer, Episcopal Diocese of Washington.

### **Report of the Bishop**

Dr. White, Vice President of the Synod, assumed the chair and invited Bishop Graham to present his report.

After noting his nearly nine years of service since being first elected in 2007, Bishop Graham provided additional background concerning (a) the Synod's new mission statement; (b) the Synod's compensation guidelines; (c) the impending departure of Pr. Sevimli as Assistant to the Bishop; (d) the June 12, 2016, mass shooting at Pulse Nightclub in Orlando, Florida; and (e) the campaign being developed within the Synod.

Upon the conclusion of this report, Vice President White yielded the chair back to Bishop Graham.

### **Report of the ELCA Churchwide Representative**

Bishop Graham introduced the Rev. Cherlyne V. Beck, Program Director, Support of Rostered Leaders and Schools, the representative from the churchwide organization to the Synod Assembly.

Pr. Beck began her remarks by reminding the members of the Assembly of the four themes developed by Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton: We are church. We are Lutheran. We are church together. We are church for the sake of the world. She continued with a video summarizing the work of the church in the United States and throughout the world. She thanked the Synod for the \$783,000 of benevolence to the churchwide organization from the Synod.

Pr. Beck continued with a preview of the 2016 Churchwide Assembly to be held in New Orleans, Louisiana, in August. The principal actions to be taken at the Churchwide Assembly include the following:

- Celebration of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation;
- Election of a Vice President to a six-year term;
- Unify the three lay rosters into a single roster of ministers of Word and Service;
- Adopt a budget for the following three years;
- Consider proposals originating from synod assemblies across the country;
- Provide an update and background information on "Declaration on the Way," a statement of areas of agreement between the Lutheran Church and the Roman Catholic Church; and

- Consider and adopt a strategy identified as Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities (AMMPARO).

She closed with brief remarks concerning Young Adults in Global Mission (YAGM), the designation of September 11, 2016, as the ELCA Day of Service, the Campaign for the ELCA, and an initiative to consider the future of the church known as “Called Forward Together in Christ.” Specific questions will be addressed in separate breakout sessions over lunch.

### Report of the Nominating Committee

The Rev. Albert Triolo, Chair, presented the report of the Nominating Committee, describing the process that the Committee undertook to identify nominees for all open positions. He expressed his appreciation for the work of the Conference Deans, who served as the Nominating Committee, and to the Synod Assembly Planning Committee. Pr. Triolo introduced each of the nominees and referred the Assembly to the Candidate Information Forms that had been included in the advance materials for the Assembly.

DC Conference – Clergy  
The Rev. James F. Phillips

At Large – Lay or Clergy  
Jackson F. Droney

Fairfax Conference – Lay  
Nels J. Hendrickson

At Large – Rostered  
Rebecca H. Kolowé, Diaconal Minister

Maryland Conference – Lay  
[no nominee presented]

SWO Representative  
Cheryl Dwyer

Montgomery Conference – Lay  
Dr. Cleophas J. Tsokodayi

Youth Representative  
Samuel S.

Potomac Conference – Lay  
Cassandra A. Smith

Consultation Committee – Clergy  
The Rev. Renata E. Eustis  
The Rev. Janice E. Mynchenberg

Virginia Conference – Clergy  
The Rev. Sandra J. Kessinger

Consultation Committee – Lay  
Karen Consiglio

Bishop Graham opened the floor to any additional nominations, by category. Hearing no additional nominations for Synod Council, Bishop Graham declared the nominations to be closed, noting that each of the open positions was uncontested. Hearing no additional nominations for the Consultation Committee, Bishop Graham declared the nominations to be closed, noting that each of the open positions was uncontested. With respect to both the Synod Council and the Consultation Committee, he noted that any unfilled vacancies would be filled by the Synod Council.

### Report of the Director for Evangelical Mission and Assistant to the Bishop

The Rev. Philip Hirsch began his report with remarks on the health of our congregations, and continued with comments on the Synod’s campaign, known as New Connections. He identified various means of

starting new ministries or expanding existing ministries, and held out the following congregations as examples: King of Kings Lutheran Church; Luther Place Memorial Church; Lutheran Church of the Abiding Presence; St. Michael's Truth Lutheran Church; and St. John's Lutheran Church, Aspen Hill/Rockville. He closed his remarks with an expression of gratitude for the service of Pr. Sevimli, Assistant to the Bishop, who had previously announced her intention to resign her position.

### **Second Racial Equity Team Video**

Bishop Graham recognized members of the congregation of Good Samaritan Lutheran Church, Lexington Park, Maryland, including the Rev. Mitch Watney. The Assembly viewed a video from the Racial Equity Team featuring a collaboration between this congregation and Dominican Apostolic, Lexington Park, entitled "The Encounter: Pastor Watney and Pastor Barber."

### **Instructions for Lunch and Meal Prayer**

The Rev. Leila Ortiz, Associate Pastor, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, gave the Assembly instructions for lunch and offered a prayer. The Assembly recessed for lunch at 12:00 noon.

### **Lunch and ELCA Representative Discussion**

Between 12:00 and 1:30 PM, the Synod Assembly was divided into two groups. During the first 45 minutes, one group broke for lunch and the other group remained in the sanctuary for a discussion with Pr. Beck, the ELCA representative. The discussion was intended to be interactive and designed to elicit suggestions and feedback regarding the future direction of the church. During the second 45 minutes, the two groups switched places.

The Assembly resumed at 1:30 PM following lunch and the group discussions.

### **“New Connections” Synod Campaign**

Bishop Graham introduced Jackson Droney from Luther Place Memorial Church to discuss the New Connections Synod Campaign. Pursuant to this campaign, congregations will be asked to set a goal to grow by 10%. Small grants may be offered to congregations to assist them in achieving this goal. Some new congregations may be started through the Campaign, although it was noted that the most effective model is one in which an existing congregation begins a new congregation from within itself. However, other means of starting new ministries were also discussed.

Bishop Graham noted that volunteer and pledge forms were included in the Synod Assembly packet, and announced the personal pledge that he and Nancy Ann Mrs. Graham had made to the Campaign.

### **Report of the Synod Treasurer**

The Rev. Tom Knoll reviewed the financial reports for the fiscal year ended January 31, 2016, describing the Synod’s operations as a conduit to support ministries throughout the church. More complete financial details were set forth in Section 4 of the materials provided to the Assembly.

### **Introduction of the Mission Spending Plan**

Karen Consiglio, Chair of the Finance Committee, presented the 2017 Mission Spending Plan, as set forth in Section 3.2.1 of the materials provided in advance to the Assembly. Pursuant to a three-year pilot program approved by the Church Council, the Synod’s churchwide mission support has been reduced to 35% of the congregational benevolence received, in exchange for assumption of direct financial responsibility for the compensation and benefits of the Director for Evangelical Mission and for any grants made to congregations within the Synod. The proposed plan calls for budgeted expenditures of \$1,651,400, including \$560,000 of churchwide mission support. The Assembly was notified that the proposal would be brought before the Assembly for approval later in the meeting. No amendments were offered to the proposed spending plan.

### **Report of the Vice President/Synod Council**

Dr. John White commended his written report to the Assembly, as set forth in Section 3.1 of the materials provided in advance to the Assembly. He noted in particular that his report was written and submitted before learning of Pr. Sevimli’s resignation as the Assistant to the Bishop.

## Report on Synod Compensation Guidelines

Dr. White then provided background information regarding the compensation guidelines for rostered leaders that had been developed and approved in prior years. These guidelines consist of an unadjusted base amount, a “point” system, and housing allowance factors. For 2017, the Synod Council has recommended that the minimum unadjusted salary amount be increased to \$58,844, with the recognition that such an increase will also result in an increase in most of the other amounts set forth in the guidelines. The recommendation was included in Section 3.3 of the materials provided to the Synod Assembly in advance.

Moved:

Seconded: To approve the Rostered Leadership Compensation Recommendations for 2017, as set forth in Section 3.3 of the meeting materials for the Assembly.

VOTED

SA16.06.04 To adopt the foregoing motion.

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## Introduction to Voting Devices

Jacob Wood, Qwizdom Inc., offered an introduction to the voting devices, together with sample questions to demonstrate the various features of the devices.

## Report of the Elections Committee/First Ballot

The Rev. Mitch Watney, Chair of the Elections Committee, led the Assembly through a series of elections by category of office.

For all open positions on the Synod Council, Pr. Watney advised the Assembly that there were no contested positions.

Moved:

Seconded: To elect all uncontested positions for the Synod Council by acclamation.

VOTED

SA16.06.06 To adopt the foregoing motion.

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Bishop Graham declared that all of the nominees for the Synod Council had been elected.

For all open positions on the Consultation Committee, Pr. Watney advised the Assembly that there were no uncontested positions.

Moved:

Seconded: To elect all uncontested positions for the Consultation Committee by acclamation.

VOTED

SA16.06.07 To adopt the foregoing motion.

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Bishop Graham declared that all of the nominees for the Consultation Committee had been elected.

### **First Report of the Reference and Counsel Committee**

The Rev. Mark Edwards, Chair of the Reference and Counsel Committee (R&C), reported to the Assembly.

Each resolution has two numbers, the R&C number, which will begin with "2016-" followed by a number. These are numbered in the chronological order received. The second number is the Secretary's number, which begins with a 6. These are the page numbers for the order in which they appear in the report. The Chair will present each resolution by giving the Synod Assembly both numbers. With the exception of the traditional "Expression of Thanks and Gratitude" resolution, the final resolutions were included in the materials provided to the Assembly.

Pr. Edwards advised the Assembly that if any member intends to propose an amendment to any of the resolutions, it would be helpful to have a written copy provided to the media coordinator as well as to the R&C Chair, so that it may be prepared as it was written for the Synod Assembly. The amendment will not be shown until it is moved from the floor.

Pr. Edwards reminded the Assembly that it is only the "Resolved" statements that are adopted. However, the "Whereas" statements are submitted as fact, lay out the issue or concern at hand, and lead to the proposed solution offered in the "Resolved" statements. Questions regarding statements in the "Whereas" clauses may be directed to a member of the R&C Committee or the author(s).

Finally, Pr. Edwards advised that any resolution arising out of the business of the Assembly must be submitted in writing to the Secretary. Should anyone have questions, they can be directed to any member of the R&C Committee.

Pr. Edwards explained that the R&C Committee advises and assists those who ask for action from a Synod Assembly. When a resolution meets the needs of the group asking for action, the R&C Committee puts it in proper order and then moves the resolution to the Synod Assembly. This action does not imply in any way that the R&C is in agreement with a resolution; the process is simply in compliance with Robert's Rules of Order for preparing and presenting resolutions to the Assembly.

### ***Greetings to Other ELCA Synods Meeting in Assembly***

*WHEREAS, other synods throughout the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) are gathering in assembly at the same time as the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod meets in Assembly, and*

*WHEREAS, we are partners in the Mission of the Gospel with other synods of this church; therefore be it*

RESOLVED, *that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod in Assembly direct the Secretary of the Synod to extend best wishes to the other synods of the ELCA who are gathering in assembly this weekend our greetings in Christ and prayers for their faithful deliberation:*

*Northern Illinois Synod  
Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod  
Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod  
Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod  
Upper Susquehanna Synod*

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Moved: To adopt the resolution entitled "Greetings to Other ELCA Synods Meeting in Assembly."

VOTED            Yes    204    No    3        Abstain 8  
SA16.06.08    To adopt the foregoing motion.

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#### ***United Nations Sustainable Development Goals***

WHEREAS, *the United Nations Millennium Development Goals 2015 Report shows that due to global efforts, since the year 1990:*

- *"17,000 fewer children die each day,"*
- *"more than 1 billion people have been lifted out of extreme poverty,"*
- *"the global under-five mortality rate has declined by more than half,"*
- *"the maternal mortality ratio has declined by 45 per cent worldwide,"*
- *"2.6 billion people who have gained access to improved drinking water;*

*and since the year 2000:*

- *"the number of out-of-school children of primary school age has fallen by almost half,"*
- *"new HIV infections fell by approximately 40 per cent,"*
- *"3.3 million malaria deaths were prevented in 12 years,"*

*yet "despite many successes, the poorest and most vulnerable people are being left behind" and we continue to face serious environmental challenges;\* and*

WHEREAS, *in September, 2015, 193 countries of the United Nations General Assembly agreed on a new set of goals to build on the successes of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), where "sustainable development goals" now include hunger, poverty, health care, education, gender, reduced inequalities, productive work, peace, justice and other specific and measurable goals in the context of what we have traditionally called "sustainability" or "creation care;" and*

WHEREAS, *the life and witness of Jesus which embodies the core values of our faith call us to the spiritual task of promoting healing and reconciling ministries that support full and productive lives for all people at home and abroad; and*

WHEREAS, *the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) has a history of social justice engagement as shown in many statements and study documents, such as Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope, and Justice (1993); and*

WHEREAS, *congregations in the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. area have a unique opportunity to take a leadership educational role because they have, and can access, members who work full time on these concerns in government, think tanks, advocacy offices, university and other programs on public policy and service delivery; therefore, be it*

RESOLVED, *that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod in Assembly encourage the congregations of the synod to engage in thoughtful and prayerful study of the United Nation's "Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development," goals and consider activities in the light of that study and to inform the synod bishop annually on their progress in study and responses for the next five years; and be it further*

RESOLVED, *that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod in Assembly direct the bishop of the synod to forward this resolution to other synodical bishops in the ELCA and encourage them to promote and engage in similar processes; and, be it further*

RESOLVED, *that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod in Assembly direct the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod Council to forward this resolution to the Church Council for consideration and possible action.*

\* *United Nations, The Millennium Development Goals Report 2015, Foreword by Ban Ki-Moon, Secretary General, 2015.*

VOTED Yes 190 No 13 Abstain 6  
SA16.06.09 To adopt the foregoing motion.

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### ***Gratitude and Support for Military Service Members and Veterans***

WHEREAS, *1.2 million Americans are currently serving in the various branches of the U.S. Armed Forces, and about 21.2 million American women and men are veterans of military service, and,*

WHEREAS, *hundreds of thousands of military personnel have been injured over the years and returned home with wounded bodies, minds, and hearts, and,*

WHEREAS, *the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) is highly committed to ministry among those in military uniform and those who have faithfully, and often sacrificially, served this nation, as exemplified by the service of the Rev. Karis Graham, the Rev. Charles Hodges, the Rev. Jeffrey Jacobson, the Rev. John Kallerson, the Rev. Alexis King, and the Rev. Terri King, military chaplains rostered in this synod; therefore, be it*

RESOLVED, *that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod in Assembly memorialize the 2016 ELCA Churchwide Assembly in New Orleans to encourage our Churchwide ministries, synods, and congregations to offer their gratitude and support for all military personnel, veterans, and their families and friends with tangible expressions of care and encouragement in one or more of the following ways:*

- a. *Express gratitude often and remain especially attentive to those serving in our Armed Forces, as well as veterans, including military and federal chaplains;*
- b. *Congregations provide to their members who serve in the military copies of the Prayer Book for the Armed Services, (Augsburg Fortress Publishing), a companion to Evangelical Lutheran Worship designed for those serving in uniform, veterans, and their families, to military personnel and their families, and collaborate with their synod and the ELCA Bureau of Federal Chaplains to donate additional copies of the prayer book to military chaplains for them to distribute to those in their care;*
- c. *Regularly lift up in prayer those who are serving and those who have served, and pray especially with and for members of the military who have been wounded or killed in the line of duty, as well as for their families;*
- d. *Regularly remember in Intercessory Prayer all of our Federal Chaplains, to include military chaplains, Veterans Administration hospital chaplains, and Federal Bureau of Prison chaplains, who bring the means of grace in the name of Christ Jesus on our behalf wherever they are called to serve;*
- e. *Lift up the vocation of those who serve in our Armed Forces, and encourage gifted women and men in our congregations to be open to the call of the Holy Spirit and the church for them to serve as ordained military and federal chaplains of our ELCA;*
- f. *The Presiding Bishop invite synods and congregations one Sunday each year (on the Sunday closest to Veterans Day) to especially remember in prayer those in military uniform, the veterans who have served, the wounded and their families in their recovery and in their coping, and the families of those who have lost their lives in military service who now live with pain and loss;*
- g. *Remembering that injuries of the mind, spirit, and relationships do not show as clearly as physical injuries, offer rituals of healing and reconciliation for active duty members and members of the Reserve and National Guard upon their return from deployment or special duty, and periodically thereafter;*
- h. *Conduct and/or participate in events in our congregations, conferences, and/or our synod that equip individuals and congregations to offer needed care and support for returning veterans. Such activities include the ELCA “Centurion Connection” and “Care for Returning Veterans” programs, support to wounded warriors, Partners in Care (a state National Guard initiative), and other efforts to receive those returning home with open hearts and arms;*

*i. Realizing that not all honorably discharged veterans transition well, and some find themselves incarcerated, congregations which already have a prison ministry are encouraged to make a special effort to seek out incarcerated veterans to thank them for their service and to help them access their veterans' benefits so that they might have a more successful transition upon their release.*

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VOTED            Yes     190     No     5           Abstain 5  
SA16.06.10    To adopt the foregoing motion.

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#### **Recognition of Anniversaries**

Bishop Graham introduced an audio-visual presentation commemorating the rostered leaders and congregations celebrating milestone anniversaries during the year.

#### **Racial Equity Team Introduction and Live Chat**

The Rev. Karen Brau, Luther Place Memorial Church, and the Rev. James Phillips, Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, introduced the Racial Equity Team and outlined its goals and objectives.

### Report of the Assistant to the Bishop

Bishop Graham introduced the Rev. Amy Thompson Sevimli, Assistant to the Bishop. Her written report was provided in Section 2.3 of the Assembly materials and was based on Ecclesiastes 3:1. Having previously announced her resignation as Assistant to the Bishop, her remarks also served as a farewell address to the Synod.

### Consideration of the Mission Spending Plan

After having been introduced and discussed earlier in the agenda, the proposed 2017 Mission Spending Plan, as set forth in Section 3.2.1 of the materials provided to the Assembly, was brought to the floor for consideration. Bishop Graham advised the Assembly that, because the time for proposing amendments to the plan had passed, the plan was not open for amendment at this time.

Moved: To approve the 2017 Mission Spending Plan as set forth in Section 3.2.1 of the materials provided to the Assembly.

VOTED            Yes     177     No     2     Abstain 3  
SA16.06.11     To adopt the foregoing motion.

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### Second Report of the Reference and Counsel Committee

Pr. Edwards, Chair of the Reference and Counsel Committee (R&C), provided the second report to the Assembly. He began by noting that the next three resolutions to be proposed for consideration by the Assembly (R&C Nos. 2016-04, 2016-05, and 2016-06) were received after the deadline established for their submission. For this reason, a separate vote (with a two-thirds majority) is required in order to secure the Assembly's approval to consider each of the resolutions to be considered.

### *African Descent Lutheran Lives Matter*

WHEREAS, *African American, African Caribbean and African national communities of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) are gifted and culturally diverse. Within the ELCA there are more than 46,100 members that identify as people of African Descent, or 1.9% of the ELCA's total population; and,*

WHEREAS, *the ELCA African Descent community is within a denomination that affirms "There is no longer Jew or Greek, slave or free, male and female; for all of you are one in Christ (Galatians 3:28)." We are called to be a church that embraces each person and confronts racial, ethnic, cultural, religious, age, gender, familial, sexual orientation, physical,*

*personal and class barriers that often manifest themselves in unjust treatment, inequalities, exclusion and violence; and,*

*WHEREAS, the United Nations declared 2015-2024 the “International Decade for People of African Descent.” Whether as descendants of the transatlantic slave trade or as more recent migrants, people of African Descent constitute some of the poorest and most marginalized groups with limited access to quality education, health services, housing, and social services; and,*

*WHEREAS, the 1993 ELCA Churchwide Assembly adopted the social statement, “Freed in Christ: Race, Ethnicity & Culture” as a confession of the sin of racism. Despite many advances by people of African Descent within the ELCA and society, racism and racial discrimination, both direct and indirect, de facto and de jure, continue to manifest themselves in inequality and disadvantage; and,*

*WHEREAS, African Descent theologians and scholars are often rejected and avoided within not all but many Lutheran academic institutions. African Descent rostered leaders acquire higher education debt, wait longer to receive calls, are less likely to receive full-time calls, and less likely to reach synod compensation guidelines; and,*

*WHEREAS, the majority of African Descent ELCA congregations were birthed out of “white flight,” a divestment from urban areas, taking socio-economic resources and abandoning a connection, call and witness. What is left are deteriorating, debt-filled buildings with shrinking memberships, in part due to the systemic and structural issues of discrimination and lack of full inclusion of African Descent gifts of leadership and worship styles; therefore, be it*

*RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod Assembly memorialize the 2016 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to include as part of its observance of the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation and the commemoration of the United Nation’s International Decade of People of African Descent the following:*

- Direct the ELCA Church Council to create a “Declaration of the ELCA to the African Descent Community” similar to the “Declaration of the ELCA to the Jewish Community (4/18/1994)” acknowledging the Lutheran church’s complicity in the 400+ years of slavery and the oppression of other marginalized groups; that people of African descent were victims of slavery, the slave trade and colonialism and continue to be victims of its consequences; and, the ELCA has perpetuated racism and discrimination through attitudes, actions, policies and practices these communities still endure. The Council will bring this “Declaration” to the 2019 Churchwide Assembly for its consideration and action with a recommendation to include this Declaration in the governing documents of the ELCA;*
- Direct the ELCA Church Council to require those who provide oversight and support for theological education in partnership with the Conference of International Black Lutherans (CIBL) to recognize and dismantle white hegemony by lifting up, encouraging and incorporating academic exploration of Black Liberation theology across*

*ELCA educational expressions, to allocate funds for the development of resources and to accomplish this by the 2019 Churchwide Assembly; and,*

- *Direct the ELCA Church Council to require the Domestic Missions Unit of the ELCA to work in partnership with the African Descent Lutheran Association to increase by 10% the number of African Descent leaders, congregations and communities served, thereby renewing its commitment (see African Descent Strategy, CWA, 2005) to create, sustain, reinvest in and support this plan of action by the 2019 Churchwide Assembly and to encourage Synods and congregations to do likewise.*

Moved:

Seconded: To consider the resolution entitled “African Descent Lives Matter.”

VOTED Yes 126 No 40 Abstain 8

SA16.06.12 To adopt the foregoing motion.

.....

Bishop Graham declared that the resolution would be considered by the Synod Assembly, and discussion of the resolution ensued.

Moved: To adopt the resolution entitled “African Descent Lives Matter.”

VOTED Yes 154 No 29 Abstain 7

SA16.06.13 To adopt the foregoing motion.

.....

### ***Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery***

WHEREAS, *the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) confesses with our Native sisters and brothers that the whole of Creation is God’s work, that God declares it all as good, and that God’s Spirit dwells within it, and*

WHEREAS, *we confess that Jesus Christ became incarnate in human form to show God’s love and mercy to all humanity, in all its variety, and to every race and people on every continent of the earth, and*

WHEREAS, *we acknowledge with pain and regret the damage done to the indigenous inhabitants of the Americas by the European conquest and migration to what Europeans called a “new world,” but which was in reality already the homeland of many peoples, and*

WHEREAS, *we recognize that Christian churches were and remain complicit in that conquest, migration and dispossession, and that Christian churches helped develop conceptions of Native peoples that blamed them for their own ills and that continue to perpetuate prejudice and injustice against them and their descendants, and*

WHEREAS, *we deplore and reject the so-called “doctrine of discovery” originated with Pope Alexander VI in 1493 and entrenched in U.S. federal law in Johnson v. McIntosh (1823), that Native inhabitants have no property or any other rights which colonizing European nations and their sovereigns are bound to respect. This principle promotes the myth that the Americas were a largely empty land that European conquerors and migrants had a right to claim, occupy, and possess simply by virtue of their Christianity and their European civilization.*

WHEREAS, *the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) and the ELCA’s full communion partners--the Episcopal Church, the United Church of Christ, the United Methodist Church and the Moravian Church--have publicly repudiated the “doctrine of discovery;” therefore, be it*

RESOLVED, *that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod Assembly offers herewith a statement of repentance and reconciliation to Native nations in this country for damage done in the name of Christianity and “civilization,” and memorialize the 2016 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to repudiate the “doctrine of discovery,” repent of the damage done in the name of the European Christian-derived “doctrine of discovery” and of complicity in the evils of colonialism in the Americas, seeking reconciliation with Native nations in this country by:*

- *directing the ELCA Office of the Presiding Bishop to plan an appropriate ELCA national ceremony of repentance and reconciliation with tribal leaders, and provide resources for similar synodical and congregational observances with local tribal leaders, at all such times and places as are appropriate; and*
- *directing the ELCA Church Council, with the help of Native communities, to commit the ELCA to the development of resources, in the next triennium, to help its congregations and people understand and reduce the negative impact of the “doctrine of discovery” and its consequences for Native people in North America; and*
- *directing the ELCA Domestic Mission Unit to bring forward to the 2019 Churchwide Assembly a renewed strategy for ministry with Native people in the ELCA and accompaniment with North American Native communities in general, with a particular commitment to long-term, stable funding of ELCA American Indian and Alaskan Native ministries, increasing partnerships with congregations and synods in the ELCA, and promoting efforts with the Native communities within which our congregations and synods reside.*

Moved:

Seconded: To consider the resolution entitled “Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery.”

VOTED Yes 138 No 43 Abstain 7

SA16.06.14 To adopt the foregoing motion.

.....

Bishop Graham declared that the resolution would be considered by the Synod Assembly, and discussion of the resolution ensued.

Moved: To adopt the resolution entitled “Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery.”

VOTED            Yes    141    No    26    Abstain 3  
SA16.06.15    To adopt the foregoing motion.

.....

***Current American Political Discourse***

*WHEREAS, during the current election cycle, a number of national candidates for high office have engaged in what many Americans would describe as hate-filled rhetoric, personal invective, bigotry, bullying and the politics of exclusion, and*

*WHEREAS, the Lutheran church worldwide strives at all times in in all ways to reflect the love of Jesus Christ for every man, woman and child, loving our neighbors as ourselves; and*

*WHEREAS, the life and witness of Jesus which embodies the core values of our faith call us to the spiritual task of promoting healing and reconciling ministries that support full and productive lives for all people at home and abroad, always honoring and nurturing the sanctity of the human spirit as a living manifestation of God’s love; and*

*WHEREAS, Jesus showed us and history taught us, it is incumbent upon each of us to live the Word of God and stand against the forces of hatred, fear and bigotry when we see them, not just to hear but to do, not to condemn but to uplift, not to cast out but to include, not to defame but to honor, not to hurt but to embrace, not to hate but to love, and*

*WHEREAS, the Founding Fathers created America and its body of laws reflecting God’s higher law, grounded forever in the belief that all people are equal in the eyes of God and man, united by how we are alike rather than how we are different; and*

*WHEREAS, America’s leaders, as sacred stewards of the hopes and dreams of the Founding Fathers, as humble representatives of the American people and as responsible and compassionate citizens of the Earth, must strive at all times to embody, reflect and honor these beliefs; therefore, be it*

*RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod in Assembly rejects the public expressions of hatred, fear and bigotry being made during current political campaigns and encourages national and local leaders to boldly, unequivocally and responsibly embrace the values of compassion, honor, respect, cooperation and compromise that are the heart and soul of America; and, be it further*

*RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod in Assembly direct the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod Council to forward this resolution to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) Church Council for consideration and possible action.*

Moved:

Seconded: To consider the resolution entitled “Current American Political Discourse.”

VOTED            Yes    120    No    32    Abstain 4  
SA16.06.16      To adopt the foregoing motion.

.....

Bishop Graham declared that the resolution would be considered by the Synod Assembly, and discussion of the resolution ensued.

Moved: To adopt the resolution entitled "Current American Political Discourse."

Moved:

Seconded:      To amend the resolution entitled "Current American Political Discourse" by inserting the phrase "and to relevant local and national political organizations" in the second Resolved clause after "Church Council" and before "for consideration".

VOTED            Yes    160    No    24    Abstain 1  
SA16.06.17      To adopt the foregoing motion.

.....

Bishop Graham declared that the amendment was adopted, and consideration returned to the resolution, as amended.

VOTED            Yes    120    No    32    Abstain 4  
SA16.06.18      To adopt the resolution entitled "Current American Political Discourse," as amended.

.....

#### ***Expression of Thanks and Gratitude***

*WHEREAS, the task of providing facilities and support for a synod assembly imposes burdens and responsibilities physically, financially, and spiritually on the host organization outside of the normal parameters of mission; and,*

*WHEREAS, the 2016 Synod Assembly Planning Committee and numerous others have worked many hours to prepare for this assembly; therefore, be it*

*RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod Assembly express its heartfelt thanks to God and to all whose support and effort have made this 2016 Synod Assembly a fruitful gathering of God's people, including:*

- the Reverend Leila Ortiz and the staff and members of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Gaithersburg, Maryland who served as our gracious and accommodating hosts, provided parking assistance, communion elements and who served as ushers;*
- the Reverend Cherlyne V. Beck, representing the ELCA Presiding Bishop and who provided for informative question and answer sessions during lunch;*
- members of the synod Racial Equity Team for sharing thoughtful and challenging video segments and for writing the opening liturgy and intercessory prayers: the Reverend*

*Shannon Anderson, the Reverend Karen Brau, the Reverend Gloria Cline-Smythe, the Reverend Renata Eustis, the Reverend Richard Graham, Ms. Deb Haynes; the Reverend Phil Hirsch, the Reverend James Phillips, the Reverend Leila Ortiz, the Reverend Jeff Jacobson, Ms. Wanda Rosado, the Reverend Carmelo Santos, the Reverend Amy Sevimli, Ms. Bianca Vazquez, and the Reverend Mitch Watney;*

- *our ecumenical guests: the Most Reverend Barry Knestout, the Archdiocese of Washington and the Reverend Olaf Wassmuth, German Lutheran Church of Washington, D.C.; the Rev. David Bennett, Eastern District Mennonite Church; the Rev. Robin Dodge, Ecumenical Officer, Episcopal Diocese of Washington;*
- *Mr. Jacob Wood of Qwizdom, Inc. for providing invaluable and patient guidance in using the voting devices;*
- *the Reverend Amy Thompson Sevimli, Assistant to the Bishop; the Reverend Philip C. Hirsch, Assistant to the Bishop and Director of Evangelical Mission; Dr. John White, Vice President of the Synod; Mr. Kevin Anderson, Secretary of the Synod and the Reverend Tom Knoll, Treasurer of the Synod, for their wisdom and encouragement in planning and executing this assembly;*
- *Ms. Katharyn Wheeler, Administrative Assistant to the Bishop and Assembly Coordinator, for her tireless effort in arranging, organizing, and tracking preparations for the assembly, for supervising the registration process and on-site administrative support, and for tirelessly cutting out 400 paper hands for the “Healing of the Nations...” and the other tasks to keep worship planning on track; and the team of administrative volunteers for the “behind the scenes” work essential to a successful assembly: Maddie Tallman, Lee Shields, Katherine Chatelaine-Samsen, Jennifer DeValue, Wasihun Gutema, the Reverend Rich Zawistoski and members of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church;*
- *the Synod Assembly Planning Committee, under the leadership of the Reverend Margrethe Kleiber, in tirelessly addressing the myriad details and decisions necessary in planning and supporting the program and agenda for this assembly: Ms. Katharyn Wheeler, the Reverend Richard Graham, the Reverend Heidi Moore, the Reverend Albert Triolo, the Reverend Mitch Watney, the Reverend Mark Edwards, Ms. Margretta Williams, Mr. Kevin Anderson, Mr. Larry Evans, Ms. Karen Krueger, Mr. David Carlson, and Mr. Philip Meuschke;*
- *the Synod’s Communications Director, Ms. Karen Krueger; Guest blogger, Margretta Williams; and Media Coordinators Mr. David Carlson and Mr. Philip Meuschke whose expertise and wisdom in designing and operating the presentation and communications equipment and content was invaluable to this assembly;*
- *the ELCA Mission Investment Fund for providing our lunch today;*
- *the Nominating Committee, consisting of the conference deans of the synod under the leadership of the Reverend Albert Triolo: the Reverend Anna Anderson, the Reverend Travis Kern, the Reverend Beth Neubauer, the Reverend Mitch Watney and the Reverend Michael Wilker;*

- *the Elections Committee under the leadership of the Reverend Mitch Watney;*
  - *the Assembly parliamentarian, Mr. Richard Ahlberg, for his wise counsel and the orientation session for those first time synod assembly voting members;*
  - *the Reverend Richard H. Graham, bishop of the synod, for his proclamation of the Gospel and his presidency of the Festive Eucharist;*
  - *the Reverend Leila Ortiz for serving this assembly as our chaplain and as assisting minister for the Festive Eucharist;*
  - *the Reverend Heidi Moore and Mr. Phillip Meuschke for leading our closing worship;*
  - *the Assembly Worship Planning Team, led by the Reverend Heidi Moore, for the inspirational Festive Eucharist and the closing worship and all who took a role in leading our worship as lectors, petitioners and communion assistants: the Reverend Carmelo Santos, Ms. Margretta Williams, the Reverend Terry Hannon, Mr. Leon LaCross, the Reverend Anna Anderson, Ms. Annette Njie, Ms. Jennifer DeValue, the Reverend Craig Endicott, Ms. Shannon Steene, the Reverend Tony Carpenter, Mr. Nels Hendricksen, the Reverend Eva Steege, Mr. Tim Murphy, Deacon Katie Miller-Holland, Ms. Heather Lutz, Mr. Kevin Anderson, Mr. Wasihun Gatema, the Reverend Janice Mynchenberg, the Reverend David Slagle Peck, Ms. Rebecca Kolowée, Ms. Jan Perry and Mr. Jerry Fuller;*
  - *Mr. Jeremy Grenhart, creative music director, Luther Place, Washington DC, musician, and Mr. Antonio Phillips, soloist for our Festive Eucharist;*
  - *Mr. Peter Schmidt, director of music, Good Shepherd, Gaithersburg for closing worship musician;*
  - *the Reference and Counsel Committee, under the leadership of the Reverend Mark Edwards;*
  - *all those who permitted their names to be placed before the assembly for consideration in elections for the Synod Council and the Consultation Committee;*
  - *those who are completing their terms of service on the Synod Council: Ms. Karen Consiglio; the Reverend Mark Edwards; the Reverend Renata Eustis; Ms. Kathy Garrison, Diaconal Minister; Ms. Desiree Jessimy; Mr. Thomas Kern; Ms. Kathleen Meier; and Ms. Emily Moran;*
  - *and our special thanks to the Reverend Richard H. Graham, Bishop of the Synod, for his leadership of this assembly.*
-

Moved: To adopt the resolution entitled “Expression of Thanks and Gratitude.”

VOTED            Yes    169    No    3       Abstain 1  
SA16.06.19    To adopt the foregoing motion.

.....

Pr. Edwards concluded the report of the Reference and Counsel Committee by introducing an emergent resolution to express the appreciation of the Synod Assembly for the service of Pr. Sevimli, who would soon be concluding her tenure as Assistant to the Bishop.

***Special Expression of Thanks and Gratitude: The Rev. Amy Thompson Sevimli***

WHEREAS,        *The Reverend Amy Thompson Sevimli has served the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod for five years as Associate Pastor of Resurrection Lutheran Church in Arlington, Virginia; and,*

WHEREAS,        *Reverend Sevimli has more recently served as an Assistant to the Bishop of this synod for eight years in various roles, faithfully carrying out her duties with grace and diligence; going above and beyond expectations on a regular basis; and,*

WHEREAS,        *Reverend Sevimli’s passion for bringing the good news of Christ to young adults and old and to those of other or no faith has been of immeasurable value to this synod and this church, providing accessible and authentic care for those struggling on their faith journey through life; and,*

WHEREAS,        *exhibiting the same compassion and care for the people of the synod, Reverend Sevimli has skillfully guided candidates and congregations in the call process, helping to ensure proper leadership for the challenges that face the church today; and,*

WHEREAS,        *Reverend Sevimli and her family are relocating to Tblisi, Republic of Georgia in August 2016 as her husband begins a new position of employment; therefore, be it:*

RESOLVED,        *that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod in assembly expresses its deep, heartfelt appreciation to the Reverend Amy Thompson Sevimli for her dedication and devotion to the work of Christ’s church as pastor and assistant to the bishop; and further be it*

RESOLVED,        *that at the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod in assembly extend its prayers for safe travel and blessings for her and her family in their new home; and, be it further*

RESOLVED,        *that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod in assembly express its approval and acclamation of this resolution by one and all with our applause.*

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Moved: To approve the resolution entitled “Special Expression of Thanks and Gratitude.”

VOTED (by acclamation)  
SA16.06.20 To adopt the foregoing motion.

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### **The 500th Anniversary of the Reformation**

Bishop Graham briefly outlined some of the events that were being planned to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in 2017, including the following:

- A three-day event, from May 30 through June 1, “Martin Luther and the Catholic Tradition,” to be held at Catholic University and the Lutheran Church of the Reformation, co-sponsored with Catholic University, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Pontifical Committee of Historical Sciences, and the German Embassy in Washington;
- A performance by the National Lutheran Choir on October 22 at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception; and
- A possible joint celebration with the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod of the 100th anniversary of Lutheran Social Services of the National Capital Area.

Information regarding these and other events will be posted to the Synod’s Web site as details become available.

### **Conclusion of Assembly**

There being no further business to bring before the Assembly, Bishop Graham presided over the order for closing of the Assembly, including the installation of the Synod Council and other elected positions. At 4:32 PM, the Assembly was dismissed for the closing worship, and the 2016 Synod Assembly was declared closed.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Kevin D. Anderson*  
Secretary



**CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS**  
OF THE METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON, D.C. SYNOD,  
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

*September 2016 Edition*

This edition of the Constitution and Bylaws of the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America supersedes all previous editions. It incorporates all amendments approved by the 2007, 2013, and 2014 Synod Assemblies and by the 2007, 2009, 2011, 2013, and 2016 Churchwide Assemblies.

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

- a. The numbers of all constitutional provisions are printed in **boldface** type.
- b. The numbers of all bylaw provisions are printed in regular type.
- c. The numbers of all continuing resolution provisions are printed in *italics*.
- d. All numerical codification indicates general subject, constitutional provisions, bylaw provisions, and continuing resolutions. For example, **†S7.01.** is a constitutional provision dealing with the synod assembly; *S7.13.01.* is a bylaw also dealing with the synod assembly; while *S7.21.A92.* is a continuing resolution adopted in 1992 dealing with the allocation of lay members of the Synod Assembly.

All provisions mandated by the ELCA Constitution have a "†" before the numerical codification (e.g. **†S1.01.**).

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## Chapter 1. NAME AND INCORPORATION

- †S1.01. The name of this synod, as determined by the Churchwide Assembly, shall be Metropolitan Washington D. C. Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- †S1.02. For the purposes of this constitution and the accompanying bylaws, the Metropolitan Washington D.C. 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 cross with three united flames emanating from the base of the cross and three entwined circles beside the cross. The name of this synod and the year of its constituting convention form the circular outer edge of the seal.

## Chapter 2. STATUS

- †S2.01. This synod possesses the powers conferred upon it, and accepts the duties and responsibilities assigned to it, in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, which are recognized as having governing force in the life of this synod.
- †S2.02. The name Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA or “this church”) as used herein refers in general references to this whole church, including its three expressions: congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization. The name Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is also the name of the corporation of the churchwide organization to which specific references may be made herein.
- †S2.03. No provision of this constitution shall be inconsistent with the constitution and bylaws of this church.
- S2.04. This synod shall be the successor in law and in fact of those portions of the jurisdictional units of the American Lutheran Church, the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches, and the Lutheran Church in America previously located on its territory, and shall assume all the privileges and obligations of its predecessors.

### Chapter 3. TERRITORY

- †S3.01. The territory of this synod, as determined by the Churchwide Assembly, shall be the District of Columbia; the counties of Calvert, Charles, Montgomery, Prince Georges, and St. Mary's in the State of Maryland; the counties of Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun, Prince William and the independent cities of Falls Church and Fairfax City within these counties, and the independent City of Alexandria in the Commonwealth of Virginia; Bermuda.
- †S3.02. "Determined by the Churchwide Assembly," as stipulated by †S3.01., is understood to include the reported changes in synod relationship made by any congregation in a border area agreed under ELCA bylaws 10.01.01. and 10.02.02.

## Chapter 4. CONFESSION OF FAITH

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

## Chapter 5. NATURE OF THE CHURCH

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

## Chapter 6. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

†S6.01. The Church is a people created by God in Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit, called and sent to bear witness to God's creative, redeeming, and sanctifying activity in the world.

†S6.02. To participate in God's mission, this synod as a part of the Church shall:

- a. Proclaim God's saving Gospel of justification by grace for Christ's sake through faith alone, according to the apostolic witness in the Holy Scripture, preserving and transmitting the Gospel faithfully to future generations.
- b. Carry out Christ's Great Commission by reaching out to all people to bring them to faith in Christ and by doing all ministry with a global awareness consistent with the understanding of God as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier of all.
- c. Serve in response to God's love to meet human needs, caring for the sick and the aged, advocating dignity and justice for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, and standing with the poor and powerless and committing itself to their needs.
- d. Worship God in proclamation of the Word and administration of the sacraments and through lives of prayer, praise, thanksgiving, witness, and service.
- e. Nurture its members in the Word of God so as to grow in faith and hope and love, to see daily life as the primary setting for the exercise of their Christian calling, and to use the gifts of the Spirit for their life together and for their calling in the world.
- f. Manifest the unity given to the people of God by living together in the love of Christ and by joining with other Christians in prayer and action to express and preserve the unity which the Spirit gives.

†S6.03. Each synod, in partnership with the churchwide organization, shall bear primary responsibility for the oversight of the life and mission of this church in its territory. In fulfillment of this role and consistent with policies and procedures of this church, the synod shall:

- a. Provide for pastoral care of congregations and rostered ministers in the synod;
- b. Plan for, facilitate, and nurture the mission of this church through congregations;

- c. Strengthen interdependent relationships among congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization, and foster relationships with agencies and institutions affiliated with or related to this church as well as ecumenical partners.
- d. Interpret the work of this church to congregations and to the public on the territory of the synod.

**†S6.03.01.** In providing for pastoral care of congregations and rostered ministers in the synod, the responsibilities of the synod include the following:

- a. providing for pastoral care of congregations, ministers of Word and Sacrament, and ministers of Word and Service in the synod, including:
  - 1) approving candidates for the ministry of Word and Sacrament in cooperation with the appropriate seminaries of this church, which may be done through multi-synodical committees;
  - 2) authorizing ordinations and ordaining ministers of Word and Sacrament on behalf of this church;
  - 3) approving ministers of Word and Service, which may be done through multi-synodical committees; and
  - 4) authorizing consecrations and consecrating ministers of Word and Service on behalf of this church; and
  - 5) consulting in the call process for rostered ministers.
- b. providing for leadership recruitment, preparation, and support in accordance with churchwide standards and policies, including:
  - 1) nurturing and supporting congregations and lay leaders;
  - 2) seeking and recruiting qualified candidates for the rostered ministries of this church;
  - 3) making provision for pastoral care, call review, and guidance;
  - 4) encouraging and supporting persons on the rosters of this church in stewardship of their abilities, care of self, and pursuit of continuing education to undergird their effectiveness of service; and

- 5) supporting recruitment of leaders for this church's colleges, universities, seminaries, and social ministry organizations.
- c. providing for discipline of congregations, ministers of Word and Sacrament, and ministers of Word and Service; as well as for termination of call, appointment, adjudication, and appeals consistent with Chapter 20 of this church's constitution.
- d. providing for archives in conjunction with other synods.

**†S6.03.02.** In planning for, facilitating, and nurturing of 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 partnerships with other synods in the region;
- b. fostering organizations for youth, women, and men, and organizations for language or ethnic communities;

- c. developing relationships with social ministry organizations and ministries, participating in their mission planning, and providing partnership funding;
- d. supporting relationships with and providing partnership funding on behalf of colleges, universities, and campus ministries;
- e. maintaining relationships with and providing partnership funding on behalf of seminaries and continuing education centers;
- f. fostering supporting relationships with camps and other outdoor ministries;
- g. fostering supporting relationships with preschools, elementary schools, and secondary schools operated by congregations of the synod;
- h. fostering relationships with ecumenical and global partners;
- i. cooperating with other synods and the churchwide organization in creating, using, and supporting regions to carry out those functions of the synod which can best be done cooperatively with other synods and the churchwide organization.

**†S6.03.04.** In interpreting the work of this church on the territory of the synod, the responsibilities of the synod include the following:

- a. encouraging financial support for the work of this church by individuals and congregations;
- b. participating in churchwide programs;
- c. interpreting social statements in a manner consistent with the interpretation given by the churchwide unit or office which assisted in the development of the statement, and suggestion of social study issues;
- d. providing ecumenical guidance and encouragement.

**†S6.04.** Except as otherwise provided in this constitution and bylaws, the Synod Council shall establish processes that will ensure that at least 60 percent of the members of the synod assemblies, councils, committees, boards, and other organizational units shall be lay persons; and that, as nearly as possible, 50 percent of the lay members of assemblies, councils, committees, boards, or other organizational units shall be female and 50 percent shall be male; and that, where possible, the representation of ministers of Word and Sacrament shall be both male and female. This

synod shall establish processes that will enable it to reach a minimum goal that 10 percent of its assemblies, councils, committees, boards, or other organizational units be persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English.

- †S6.04.01. It is the goal of this synod that 10 percent of the membership of synod assemblies, councils, committees, boards and/or other organizational units be persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English.
- †S6.04.02. It is the goal of this synod that at least 10 percent of the voting members of the Synod Assembly, Synod Council, committees, and organizational units of this synod be youth and young adults. The Synod Council shall establish a plan for implementing this goal. For purposes of the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of this synod, the term "youth" means a voting member of a congregation who has not reached the age of 18 at the time of election or appointment for service. The term "young adult" means a voting member of a congregation between the ages of 18 and 30 at the time of election or appointment for service.
- †S6.05. Each assembly, council, committee, board, commission, task force, or other body of this synod or any synodical units shall be conclusively presumed to have been properly constituted, and neither the method of selection nor the composition of any such assembly, council, committee, board, commission, task force, or other body may be challenged in a court of law by any person or be used as the basis of a challenge in a court of law to the validity or effect of any action taken or authorized by any such assembly, council, committee, board, commission, task force, or other body.
- †S6.06. References herein to the nature of the relationship between the three expressions of this church—congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization—as being interdependent or as being in a partnership relationship describe the mutual responsibility of these expressions in God's mission and the fulfillment of the purposes of this church as described in this chapter, and do not imply or describe the creation of partnerships, co-ventures, agencies, or other legal relationships recognized in civil law.

## Chapter 7. SYNOD ASSEMBLY

- †S7.01. This synod shall have a Synod Assembly, which shall be its highest legislative authority. The powers of the Synod Assembly are limited only by the provisions in the Articles of Incorporation, this constitution and bylaws, the assembly's own resolutions, and the constitutions and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- †S7.11. A regular meeting of the Synod Assembly shall be held at least triennially.
- S7.12. Special meetings of the Synod Assembly may be called by the bishop with the consent of the Synod Council, and shall be called by the bishop at the request of one-fifth of the voting members of the Synod Assembly.
- a. The notice of each special meeting shall define the purpose for which it is to be held. The scope of actions to be taken at such a special meeting shall be limited to the subject matter(s) described in the notice.
  - b. If the special meeting of the Synod Assembly is required for the purpose of electing a successor bishop because of death, resignation, or inability to serve, the special meeting shall be called by the Synod Council after consultation with the presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- S7.13. Notice of the time and place of all meetings of the Synod Assembly shall be given by the secretary of this synod.
- S7.13.01. The secretary shall give written notice to the membership of the time and place of all meetings of the Synod Assembly at least 30 days in advance of the meeting.
- S7.13.02. The secretary shall provide the membership with all reports and recommendations to be considered at a regular meeting of the Synod Assembly at least 10 days in advance of the meeting.
- S7.13.A14 All recommendations and resolutions of units of this synod, the Synod Council, as well as those from affiliated or related agencies of this synod, upon which Synod Assembly action is requested shall be submitted to the Secretary of the Synod no later than March 1, or 60 days before the opening of the assembly.
- S7.13.B14 Resolutions may be received from voting members to the assembly, congregation councils, tables, teams, and affiliated agencies and institutions. Conferences may present resolutions through the signature of delegates, clergy or lay, or through congregation councils.

- S7.14.** One-half of the members of the Synod Assembly shall constitute a quorum.
- †S7.21.** The membership of the Synod Assembly, of which at least 60 percent of the voting membership shall be composed of laypersons, shall be constituted as follows:
- 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, in addition to the voting membership of lay members of congregations provided in item **†S7.21.c.**
  - c. A minimum of one lay member elected by each congregation with fewer than 175 baptized members and a minimum of two lay members elected by each congregation with more than 175 baptized members related to this synod, one of whom shall be male and one of whom shall be female, shall be voting members. The Synod Council shall establish a formula to provide additional lay representation from congregations on the basis of number of members in the congregation. The Synod Council shall seek to ensure that, as nearly as possible, 50 percent of the lay members of the assembly shall be female and 50 percent shall be male. Additional members from each congregation normally shall be equally divided between male and female.
  - d. Voting membership shall include the officers of this synod.
- †S7.21.01.** 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.A92.** For the allocation of lay members of the Synod Assembly the most current church body statistics are the basis for determining baptized members. To achieve the proper ratio, each congregation of 450 baptized members will be entitled to an additional voting member and another voting member for each full 250 members over 450.
- S7.21.02.** Congregations with a baptized membership which consists of at least 10% persons of color and/or whose primary language is other than English will be entitled to one additional member. That member will be a person of color or whose primary language is other than English.
- S7.22.** This synod may establish processes that permit retired ordained ministers,

retired associates in ministry, retired deaconesses, and retired diaconal ministers on the roster of the synod to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, consistent with †S7.21.c. above. The synod may establish processes that permit ordained ministers, associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers who are on leave from call, or those designated as disabled, on the roster of the synod to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, consistent with †S7.21.c. above. If the synod does not establish processes to permit the rostered leaders specified above to serve as voting members, they shall have voice but not vote in the meetings of the Synod Assembly.

- S7.22.01. Retired ordained ministers, retired associates in ministry, retired deaconesses and retired diaconal ministers on the roster of this synod shall have voice and vote at Synod Assemblies.
- S7.23.** The presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and such other official representatives of this church as may be designated from time to time by the Church Council shall have voice but not vote in the meetings of the Synod Assembly. Like privileges shall be accorded to those additional persons whom the Synod Assembly or the Synod Council shall from time to time designate.
- S7.24.** Ordained ministers under call on the roster of this synod shall remain as members of the Synod Assembly so long as they remain under call and so long as their names appear on the roster of ordained ministers of this synod. Associates in ministry, deaconesses of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and diaconal ministers of this church serving under call on the roster of this synod shall remain as members of the Synod Assembly so long as they remain under call and so long as their names appear on the official lay roster of this synod. Lay members of the Synod Assembly representing congregations shall continue as such until replaced by the election of new members or until they have been disqualified by termination of membership. Normally, congregations will hold elections prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.
- †S7.25. Except as otherwise provided in this constitution or in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions* of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, each voting member of the Synod Assembly shall be a voting member of a congregation of this synod.
- S7.26.** This synod may establish processes through the Synod Council that permit representatives of congregations under development and authorized worshiping communities of the synod, under ELCA bylaw 10.02.03., to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, consistent with †S7.21.
- S7.26.01. Authorized worshiping communities of this synod shall each be allocated a maximum of two voting members of the Synod Assembly.

- S7.27.** This synod may establish processes through the Synod Council to grant an ordained minister 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 ordained minister's service in a congregation of this church.
- S7.27.01. An ordained minister 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 shall have the privilege of both voice and vote in the Synod Assembly during the period of that ordained minister's service in a congregation of this church upon the recommendation of the bishop and the approval of the Synod Council.
- S7.28.** Duly elected voting members of the Synod Council who are not otherwise voting members of the Synod Assembly under †**S7.21.** shall be granted the privilege of both voice and vote as members of the Synod Assembly.
- †**S7.31.** Proxy and absentee voting shall not be permitted in the transaction of any business of this synod.
- S7.32.** *Robert's Rules of Order*, latest edition, shall govern parliamentary procedure of the Synod Assembly, unless otherwise ordered by the assembly.
- S7.32.01. Special rules of procedure may be adopted at the beginning of each regular or special meeting of the Synod Assembly as long as they are not in conflict with *Robert's Rules of Order*, latest edition.
- S7.33.** "Ex officio" as used herein means membership with full rights of voice and vote unless otherwise expressly limited.

## Chapter 8. OFFICERS

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

### S8.10. Bishop

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

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

- a. Preach, teach, and administer the sacraments in accord with the Confession of Faith of this church.
- b. Have primary responsibility for the ministry of Word and Sacrament in this synod and its congregations, providing pastoral care and leadership for this synod, its congregations, its ministers of Word and Sacrament, and its ministers of Word and Service.
- c. Exercise solely this church's power to ordain (or provide for the ordination by another synodical bishop of) approved candidates who have received and accepted a properly issued, duly attested letter of call for the office of ministry of Word and Sacrament (and as provided in the bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America).
- d. Consecrate (or provide for the consecration of) approved candidates who have received and accepted a properly issued, duly attested letter of call for service as ministers of Word and Service.
- e. Attest letters of call for persons called to serve congregations in the synod, letters of call for persons called by the Synod Council, and letters of call for persons on the rosters of this synod called by the Church Council.
- f. Install (or provide for the installation of) rostered ministers whose calls the bishop has attested.
- g. Exercise leadership in the mission of this church and in so doing:
  - 1) Interpret and advocate the mission and theology of the whole church;
  - 2) Lead in fostering support for and commitment to the mission

- of this church within this synod;
- 3) Coordinate the use of the resources available to this synod as it seeks to promote the health of this church's life and witness in the areas served by this synod;
  - 4) Submit a report to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly concerning the synod's life and work; and
  - 5) Advise and counsel this synod's related institutions and organizations.
- h. Practice leadership in strengthening the unity of the Church and in so doing:
- 1) Exercise oversight of the preaching, teaching, and administration of the sacraments within this synod in accord with the Confession of Faith of this church;
  - 2) Be responsible for administering the constitutionally established process for the resolution of controversies and for the discipline of rostered ministers and congregations of this synod;
  - 3) Be the chief ecumenical officer of this synod;
  - 4) Consult regularly with other synodical bishops and the Conference of Bishops;
  - 5) Foster awareness of other churches throughout the Lutheran world communion and, where appropriate, engage in contact with leaders of those churches;
  - 6) Cultivate communion in faith and mission with appropriate Christian judicatory leaders functioning within the territory of this synod; and
  - 7) Be *ex officio* a member of the Churchwide Assembly.
- i. Oversee and administer the work of this synod and in so doing:
- 1) Serve as the president of the synod corporation and be the chief executive and administrative officer of this synod, who is authorized and empowered, in the name of this synod, to sign deeds or other instruments and to affix the seal of this synod;

- 2) Preside at all meetings of the Synod Assembly and provide for the preparation of the agenda for the Synod Assembly, Synod Council, and the council's Executive Committee;
- 3) Ensure that the constitution and bylaws of the synod and of the churchwide organization are duly observed within this synod, and that the actions of the synod in conformity therewith are carried into effect;
- 4) Exercise supervision over the work of the other officers;
- 5) Coordinate the work of all synodical staff members;
- 6) Appoint all committees for which provision is not otherwise made;
- 7) Be a member of all committees and any other organizational units of the synod, except as otherwise provided in this constitution;
- 8) Provide for preparation and maintenance of synodical rosters containing the names and addresses of all rostered ministers of this synod and a record of the calls under which they are serving or the date on which they become retired or disabled;
- 9) Annually bring to the attention of the Synod Council the names of all rostered ministers on leave from call or engaged in approved graduate study in conformity with the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of this church and pursuant to prior action of this synod through the Synod Council;
- 10) Provide for prompt reporting to the secretary of this church of:
  - a) additions to and subtractions from the rosters of this synod and the register of congregations;
  - b) the issuance of certificates of transfer for rostered ministers in good standing who have received and accepted a properly issued, duly attested, regular letter of call under the jurisdiction of another synod; and
  - c) the entrance of the names of such persons for whom proper certificates of transfer have been received;

- 11) Provide for preparation and maintenance of a register of the congregations of this synod and the names of the laypersons who have been elected to represent them; and
- 12) Appoint a statistician of the synod, who shall secure the parochial reports of the congregations and make the reports available to the secretary of this church for collation, analysis, and distribution of the statistical summaries to this synod and the other synods of this church.

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

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

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

**†S8.16. Conflicts of Interest**

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

- a. Whenever a synodical bishop determines that a matter of the kind described in **†S8.16.01.b.** may require his or her determination or action with respect to a related individual as defined in **†S8.16.01.c.**, the synodical bishop shall withdraw from personal involvement in such matter and shall so notify the presiding bishop. The presiding bishop shall then appoint another synodical bishop from the same region to handle the matter to conclusion. In dealing with such matter, the appointed bishop shall exercise all of the functions and authority to the same extent as if the appointed bishop were the elected bishop of the withdrawing bishop's synod.

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

**S8.20. Vice President**

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

S8.21.01. The vice president will serve as a member *ex officio* of all Churchwide Assemblies.

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

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

**S8.30. Secretary**

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

†S8.32. The secretary shall:

- a. Keep the minutes of all meetings of the Synod Assembly and Synod Council, be responsible for the printing and distribution of such minutes, and perform such other duties as this synod may from time to time direct.

- b. Be authorized and empowered, in the name of this synod, to attest all instruments which require the same, and which are signed and sealed by the bishop.
- c. In consultation with the bishop, classify and arrange all important papers and documents and deposit them in the archives of this synod.
- d. Submit to the secretary of this church at least nine months before each regular Churchwide Assembly a certified list of the voting members elected by the Synod Assembly.

**S8.40. Treasurer**

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

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

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

Council, which shall be in the custody of the secretary, and the premium therefor 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:

- a. The bishop of this synod shall be elected to a term of six years and may be re-elected.
- b. The vice president and secretary of this synod shall be elected to a term of four years and may be re-elected.
- c. The treasurer of this synod shall be elected or appointed to a four-year term and may be re-elected or reappointed.

S8.52. The terms of newly elected officers shall begin on September 1 immediately following election.

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

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

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

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

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

- a. Proceedings for the recall or dismissal of a synodical bishop shall be instituted by written petition by:
  - 1) the Synod Council on an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of its elected members present and voting;
  - 2) the Synod Assembly on an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of its members present and voting;
  - 3) at least 10 synodical bishops; or
  - 4) the presiding bishop of this church.
- b. Proceedings for the recall or dismissal of an officer of a synod, other than the synodical bishop, shall be instituted by written petition by:
  - 1) the Synod Council on an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of its elected members present and voting;
  - 2) the Synod Assembly on an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of its members present and voting; or
  - 3) the synodical bishop.
- c. The petition shall be filed with the chair of the Committee on Appeals (in care of the secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 8765 West Higgins Road, Chicago, Illinois 60631) and shall set forth the specific charge or charges.
- d. Upon the filing of a written petition, the Executive Committee of the Synod Council may temporarily suspend the officer from service in

the synod without prejudice, but with continuation of compensation, including benefits, if the officer is a salaried employee of the synod.

- e. In the case of alleged physical or mental incapacity of an officer of the synod, the procedures outlined in **†S8.56**. shall be followed, and such officer shall comply with the decision of the Synod Council. If such officer fails or refuses to comply, the Synod Council may proceed to petition for recall or dismissal as follows:
  - 1) the Synod Council will submit a written report of their findings and the basis of their decision to the Committee on Appeals.
  - 2) the Committee on Appeals, other than those who are disqualified, shall review the findings and decision of the Synod Council and by an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of those present and voting may adopt the findings and grant the petition.
- f. If the synod officer is a minister of Word and Sacrament, grounds for recall or dismissal include those set forth in ELCA bylaw 20.21.01. and as defined under the process described in ELCA constitutional provisions 20.20. and 20.21. as grounds for discipline. If the officer is a minister of Word and Service, grounds for recall or dismissal include those set forth in ELCA bylaw 20.22.01. and as defined under the process described in ELCA constitutional provisions 20.20. and 20.21. as grounds for discipline.
- g. If the officer is a layperson, grounds for recall or dismissal include those set forth in ELCA bylaw 20.41.01. as grounds for discipline.
- h. If the case of alleged willful disregard or violation of the constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions or of alleged conduct as would subject the officer to disciplinary action, the following procedures shall apply:
  - 1) the petition shall be referred to the Committee on Appeals, which shall function as the discipline hearing committee that shall conduct a hearing in accordance with the rules provided for in ELCA bylaw 20.21.16. except to the extent that those rules are in conflict with the provisions of this bylaw; and
  - 2) the members of the Committee on Appeals, other than those who are disqualified, may grant the petition by an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of those present and

voting.

- i. Written notice of a decision by the Committee on Appeals that the charges have been sustained shall be given to the affected officer and to the Synod Council, and the office shall be vacated.

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

## Chapter 9. NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

- †S9.01. The Synod Assembly shall elect such officers of this synod and such other persons as the constitution and bylaws may require, according to procedures set forth in the bylaws. The Synod Assembly shall elect members of the Churchwide Assembly in accordance with bylaw 12.41.11. of the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- †S9.02. 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 appointed by the Synod Council to serve for each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly. Additional nominations may be made from the floor for all elections for which nominations are made by the Nominating Committee.
- S9.03.01. The Nominating Committee shall be composed of the six conference deans and five lay at-large members. The lay and clergy makeup of this committee should be in the spirit of **S6.04** and **S7.21** of the Constitution.
- S9.04. The bishop shall be elected by the Synod Assembly by ecclesiastical ballot. Three-fourths of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election on the first ballot. If no one is elected, the first ballot shall be considered the nominating ballot. Three-fourths of the legal votes cast on the second ballot shall be necessary for election. The third ballot shall be limited to the seven persons (plus ties) who received the greatest number of legal votes on the second ballot, and two-thirds of the 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% 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 votes on the previous ballot.
- 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 Nominating Committee shall nominate at least one person for secretary; additional nominations may be made from the floor.
- S9.07. The Nominating Committee shall nominate at least one person for treasurer; additional nominations may be made from the floor.
- S9.08. In all elections, except for the bishop, the names of the persons receiving the highest number of votes, but not elected by a majority of the 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.

**S9.11.** The Synod Council shall elect or appoint representative(s) to the steering committee of its region.

S9.11.01. The Synod Council shall appoint from its membership representative(s) to the coordinating council of its regional center for mission.

**†S9.12.** Background checks and screening shall be required and completed for persons nominated as synodical officers prior to their election, if possible, or as soon as practical after their election. The specific procedures and timing of background checks and screening shall be determined by the Synod Council.

## Chapter 10. SYNOD COUNCIL

- †S10.01.** The Synod Council, consisting of the four officers of the synod, 10 to 24 other members, and at least one youth and at least one young adult, shall be elected by the Synod Assembly.
- a. Each person elected to the Synod Council shall be a voting member of a congregation of this synod, with the exception of ministers on a roster of this synod who reside outside the territory of this synod. The process for election and the term of office when not otherwise provided shall be specified in the bylaws. A member of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, unless otherwise elected as a voting member of the Synod Council, may serve as an advisory member of the Synod Council with voice but not vote.
  - b. The term of office of members of the Synod Council, with the exception of the officers and the youth member, shall be two years.
- †S10.02.** The Synod Council shall be the board of directors of this synod and shall serve as its interim legislative authority between meetings of the Synod Assembly. It may make decisions 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 ordained ministers and of other official rosters, receive and act upon appropriate recommendations regarding those persons whose status is subject to reconsideration and action under the constitution and bylaws of the ELCA, and make a report to the Synod Assembly of the Synod Council's actions in this regard.
  - e. Issue letters of call to ordained ministers and letters of call to associates in ministry, members of the Deaconess Community of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and diaconal ministers as authorized by Chapter 7 of the constitution and bylaws

of the ELCA.

- f. Fill vacancies until the next regular meeting of the Synod Assembly, except as may otherwise be provided in the constitution or bylaws of this synod, and determine the fact of the incapacity of an officer of this synod.
- g. Report its actions to the regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.
- h. Perform such other functions as are set forth in the bylaws of this synod, or as may be delegated to it by the Synod Assembly.

**S10.04.** When requests for appropriations or changes to the recommended appropriations are made from the floor of the Synod Assembly, they shall be referred to the Synod Council. If its report on the request is favorable, a simple majority of the members voting shall be required for adoption; but if its report is unfavorable, a two-thirds vote of the members voting shall be required for adoption. Any request to increase the budget presented by the Synod Council must be accompanied by a statement detailing the source of the necessary revenue.

**S10.05.** No elected member of the Synod Council shall receive compensation for such service.

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

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

S10.07.01. To the extent permitted by state law, meetings of the Synod Council and its committees may be held electronically or by telephone conference, and notice of all meetings may be provided electronically.

S10.07.02. The Synod Council shall consist of the four officers of this synod; one pastor and one lay person from each of this synod's conferences; four members elected at-large, one of whom shall be an associate in ministry, deaconess or diaconal minister; one member from the youth organization; and one member from the Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America on the territory of this synod. The pastor and lay person for each conference shall be members from different congregations.

S10.07.03. The representatives of the conferences to the Synod Council shall be

elected by the Synod Assembly from nominations made from the conferences. At least one nominee shall be given for each representative from the conferences. The members-at-large shall be elected by the Synod Assembly from the nominees presented by the Nominating Committee. The youth representative shall be elected by the Synod Assembly from the nomination made by the youth organization. The representative from the Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America on the territory of this synod shall be elected by the Synod Assembly from the nomination made by the women's organization. The term of office shall be two years and she would be eligible for two successive terms.

- S10.07.04. The representatives from the conferences and the members elected at large shall be elected for a term of two years and are eligible for two full successive terms. Terms of office shall be staggered so that terms of one-half of the clergy representatives and the terms of one-half of the lay representatives shall expire each year. Within each conference, the clergy and lay terms shall expire in alternate years. The terms of one-half of the at-large members shall expire each year.
- S10.07.05. The Synod Council shall meet at least four times annually. Special meetings may be called by the bishop and shall be called by the bishop at the request of six members of the Synod Council.
- S10.07.06. There shall be an Executive Committee which shall consist of the bishop, vice president, secretary, treasurer, and four members of the Synod Council. Of the four members elected by the Synod Council, no more than one shall be from the same conference. The Executive Committee shall exercise such powers as delegated by the Synod Council.
- S10.07.07. The Synod Council shall assist the life and mission of this synod through oversight, coordination, and support of all the tables, teams, and committees of this synod. Whenever a table, team, or committee fails to fulfill its responsibilities, the Synod Council shall first encourage the leadership of said table, team, or committee to fulfill their responsibilities before exercising its own oversight obligation.
- S10.07.08. Any activity or responsibility of this synod not defined or specified for any officer, table, team, and committee shall be the responsibility of the Synod Council.
- S10.07.09. The Synod Council, upon recommendation of the bishop, shall appoint an archivist for this synod.
- S10.07.10. No member of the Synod Council shall simultaneously serve as chair of a synodical table.

## Chapter 11. COMMITTEES AND ORGANIZATIONAL UNITS

- †S11.01. There shall be an Executive Committee, a Consultation Committee, a Committee on Discipline, a Mutual Ministry Committee, an Audit Committee, and such other committees as this synod may from time to time determine. The duties and functions of such committees, or any other organizational units created by this synod, and the composition and organizational structure of such units, shall be as set forth in this constitution or in the bylaws or continuing resolutions, and shall be subject to any applicable provisions or requirements of the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- S11.01.01. The work of this synod shall be carried out by its organizational units. Unless otherwise provided, membership of each organizational unit shall consist of the chairperson and at least two other persons. The bishop of this synod shall be an *ex-officio* member of all organizational units. Each organizational unit shall report to the Synod Council.
- S11.01.02. Each organizational unit may, with the approval of the Synod Council, form necessary subcommittees to carry out their purposes and responsibilities and appoint members thereof without restriction as to number.
- S11.01.03. *Robert's Rules of Order*, latest edition, shall govern parliamentary procedure of the Synod Council, organizational units, and official business meetings of the conferences.
- S11.01.10. TABLES
- S11.01.11. A table is an organizational unit of the synod which has been designated by the Synod Council.
- S11.01.12. Members of tables are appointed by the bishop unless their membership is provided for elsewhere in the constitution or bylaws. The Synod's Director for Evangelical Mission shall be an *ex-officio* member of all tables.
- S11.01.13. There shall be a Primary Mission Table, which shall be the Synod Council. This table shall be responsible for the overall Mission Strategy of the synod that makes and grows disciples of Jesus Christ. The Primary Mission Table shall make decisions regarding the funding of synodical initiatives, starting new congregations, and opening missions, and may make recommendations to the Synod Assembly. This table shall be accountable to the Synod Assembly. Membership and meetings shall be identical to those of the Synod Council.
- S11.01.14. There shall be a New and Renewing Mission Table, which shall develop and renew existing congregations in the synod for the purpose of making

and growing disciples of Jesus Christ. This table shall make decisions regarding budgeted and dedicated mission funds and make recommendations to the Synod Council regarding strategies involving new and existing congregations. This table shall be accountable to the bishop and to the Synod Council.

- S11.01.15. There shall be a Stewardship and Mission Support Table, which shall assist congregations in their ongoing stewardship ministries that make and grow disciples of Jesus Christ, and shall provide leadership in developing a unified mission funding strategy for all synodical, churchwide, and cooperative ministries. This table shall communicate and interpret the mission work of this, and shall oversee Gifts of Hope. This table shall be accountable to the bishop and to the Synod Council.
- S11.01.20. TEAMS
- S11.01.21. A team is an organizational unit of the synod whose work is directed toward a specific issue, initiative, or focus in the life of the synod. A team may be organized as a standing body or as a single-task, temporary body. A recognized synod team shall have the cognizance, consent, and approved resources to perform activities and make recommendations to others in the specific area for which it was organized.
- S11.01.22. A team shall apply to the Synod Council for recognition and support, proposing its own mission, structure, duration, and membership. Where possible, the team's membership shall be consistent with membership principles expressed in **†S6.04**.
- S11.01.23. A team shall report to the Synod Council at least once each year or as otherwise directed by the Synod Council. Teams may carry out their tasks in concert with synod tables, committees, and other teams. The Synod Council may rescind a team's organizational unit status at any time. A team may end its own organizational unit status at any time by notification to the Synod Council.
- S11.01.30. COMMITTEES
- S11.01.31. A committee is an organizational unit of this synod which is given the responsibility for a specific task or function.
- S11.01.32. In addition to the committees identified in **†S11.01**, committees may include a Candidacy Committee, an Ecumenical Affairs Committee, a Finance Committee, a Global Mission Committee (with companion synod subcommittees and working groups established in cooperation with churchwide global mission partners), a Personnel Committee, and a Youth Ministry Committee. Additional committees may be established as

necessary by the Synod Assembly, the Synod Council, or the bishop, and shall report to the electing or appointing organizational unit.

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

S11.02.01. The Consultation Committee shall be composed of 12 members, six ordained ministers and six laypersons. The terms of committee members shall be staggered so that the terms of four members (two ordained ministers and two laypersons) shall expire every two years in even numbered years.

**†S11.03.** The Committee on Discipline of this synod shall consist of 12 persons, of whom six shall be ministers of Word and Sacrament and six shall be laypersons, who shall each be elected by the Synod Assembly for a term of six years without consecutive re-election.

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

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

S11.03.01. The terms of office for members of the Committee on Discipline shall be so arranged that the terms of four members (two clergy and two lay) shall expire every two years in odd numbered years.

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

S11.04.01. The committee, composed of five persons, shall seek to give encouragement by its concern for the spiritual, emotional and physical well-being of the bishop and staff persons of this synod. It will offer support when they are experiencing personal or pastoral stress. It will allow for open communication concerning attitudes and conditions within this synod.

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

**S11.10.** General Provisions

**S11.11.** This synod shall in its bylaws or by continuing resolution establish a process to ensure that the members of its committees and other organizational units will be persons possessing the necessary knowledge and competence to be effective members of such units, and to meet the requirements of **†S6.04**. With the exception of 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 the congregation of this synod.

## Chapter 12. CONFERENCES, CLUSTERS, COALITIONS, AREA SUBDIVISIONS, AND NETWORKS

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

S12.01.01. There shall be six conferences in this synod designated as follows:

- a. The Virginia Conference which shall include all congregations in Loudoun County and that area of Fairfax County north of Interstate 66 in the Commonwealth of Virginia.
- b. The Fairfax Conference which shall include all congregations in Prince William County. It shall also include that area of Fairfax County south of Interstate 66 and west of Interstate 495, and west of Interstate 95 in the Commonwealth of Virginia.
- c. The Potomac Conference which shall include all congregations in Arlington County, the City of Alexandria and those areas of Fairfax County, south of Interstate 66 and east of Interstate 495, and east of Interstate 95 in the Commonwealth of Virginia.
- d. The District of Columbia Conference which shall include all congregations in the District of Columbia, and Bermuda.
- e. The Montgomery Conference which shall include all congregations in Montgomery County in the State of Maryland.
- f. The Maryland Conference which shall include all congregations in Prince George's, Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's counties in the State of Maryland.

S12.01.02. Congregations which are located in close proximity to the territory of another conference may apply to the Synod Council for a transfer to that conference. The Synod Council shall provide a hearing for the appropriate leadership of the petitioning congregation and shall upon due consideration report its actions to that congregation.

S12.01.03. Each conference shall elect from its pastors a dean, and from among its pastors or lay members a secretary under procedures established by each conference. They shall serve two-year terms and are eligible for two full consecutive terms.

- S12.01.04. Each conference shall hold meetings of its ordained ministers, rostered lay ministers, and lay delegates at least twice a year. The meeting prior to the Synod Assembly shall be the annual meeting for the conference. Special meetings may be called by the bishop of this synod or by the dean of the conference in consultation with the bishop and shall be called by the dean upon the request of one-fifth of the number of the ordained ministers, rostered lay ministers, and lay delegates of the conference. One-third of the ordained ministers, rostered lay ministers and lay delegates of the conference shall constitute a quorum.
- S12.01.05. Persons elected by congregations to be voting members of the Synod Assembly, or their duly chosen alternates, shall attend the annual meeting of their conference. Each conference congregation is entitled to the same number of voting members at conference meetings as at the Synod Assembly and when official business of the conference is to be conducted.
- S12.01.06. It shall be the responsibility of the dean of the conference to:
- a. Advise and assist the bishop in matters pertaining to the ordained ministers, rostered lay ministers, the congregations, and the conference.
  - b. Call and preside over the meetings of the conference and be responsible for setting the agenda for such meetings.
  - c. Encourage collegiality and study among the ordained ministers, rostered lay ministers, and congregations of the conference.
  - d. Encourage collegiality and clustering among the ordained ministers and congregations on an inter-conference level.
  - e. Perform other functions as this synod may assign.

## Chapter 13. CONGREGATIONS

- †S13.01. Each congregation, except those certified as congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America by the uniting churches, prior to being listed in the register of congregations of this synod, shall adopt the *Model Constitution for Congregations* or one acceptable to this synod that is not in contradiction to the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- a. **New congregations.** A congregation newly formed by this church and any congregation seeking recognition and reception by this church shall:
    - 1) Accept the criteria for recognition and reception as a congregation of this church, fulfill the functions of the congregation, and accept the governance provisions as provided in Chapter 9 of the ELCA constitution and bylaws.
    - 2) Adopt governing documents that include fully and without alterations the Preamble, Chapter 1, where applicable, and all required provisions of Chapters 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 15, 16, 17, 18, and 19 in the *Model Constitution for Congregations* consistent with requirements of the constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of this church. Bylaws and continuing resolutions, appropriate for inclusion in these chapters and not in conflict with these required provisions in the *Model Constitution for Congregations*, the constitution of this synod, or the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, may be adopted as described in Chapters 16 and 18 of the *Model Constitution for Congregations*.
    - 3) Accept the commitments expected of all congregations of the ELCA as stated in \*C6.01., \*C6.02., and \*C6.03., of the *Model Constitution for Congregations*.
  - b. **Congregations from another church body.** If a congregation is a member of another church body, the leaders of the congregation first should consult with the appropriate authorities of that church body before taking action to leave its current church body. After such consultation, leaders of the congregation should make contact with the ELCA synod bishop or staff where the congregation is located.
  - c. **Recognition and reception.** Recognition and reception into this church of transferring or independent congregations by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is based on the judgment

of the synod and action by the synod through the Synod Council and Synod Assembly. The synod bishop shall provide for prompt reporting of such additions to the secretary of this church for addition to the register of congregations.

- †S13.02. It shall be the responsibility of each congregation of this synod annually to choose from among its voting members laypersons to serve as members of the Synod Assembly as well as persons to represent it at meetings of any conference, cluster, coalition, or other area subdivision of which it is a member. The number of persons to be elected by each congregation and other qualifications shall be as prescribed in guidelines established by this synod.
- S13.11. When a pastor or a rostered lay 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 pastor or rostered lay minister shall make satisfactory settlement of the obligation before calling a successor.
- †S13.19. A congregation considering a relocation shall confer with the bishop of the synod in which it is territorially located and the appropriate unit of the churchwide organization before any steps are taken leading to such action. The approval of the Synod Council shall be received before any such action is effected.
- †S13.20. A congregation considering development of an additional site to be used regularly for worship shall confer with the bishop of the synod in which it is territorially located and the appropriate unit of the churchwide organization before any steps are taken leading to such action.
- S13.21. The alignment of congregations in pastoral charges, and all alterations in any alignment, shall be subject to approval by the Synod Assembly or by the Synod Council.
- †S13.22. Each congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America within the territory of this synod, except those which are in partnership with the Slovak Zion Synod, shall establish and maintain a relationship with this synod.
- †S13.23. Provision 9.71. of the ELCA constitution shall govern the relationship of this synod and a congregation of this synod regarding the property of the congregation. This synod may transfer or convey property to a congregation of the synod, subject to restrictions accepted by the congregation, including provision that if the Synod Council, in its sole and exclusive discretion, determines (1) that the property is not being used to

serve the mission and ministry needs of this church, or (2) that the congregation has transferred, encumbered, mortgaged, or in any way burdened or impaired any right, title, or interest in the property without the prior approval of the Synod Council, then title to the property shall revert to the synod, and the congregation, upon written demand, shall reconvey the property to the synod.

- S13.24.** If any congregation of this synod has disbanded, or if the members of a congregation agree that it is no longer possible for it to function as such, or if in the opinion of the Synod Council that the membership of a congregation has become so scattered or so diminished in numbers as to make it impractical for such a congregation to fulfill the purposes for which it was organized or that it is necessary for this synod to protect the congregation's property from waste and deterioration, the Synod Council, itself or through trustees appointed by it, may take charge and control of the property of the congregation to hold, manage, and convey the same on behalf of this synod. The congregation shall have the right to appeal the decision to the Synod Assembly.
- S13.25.** This synod may temporarily assume administration of a congregation upon its request or with its concurrence.
- S13.30. Discipline**
- †S13.31.** Congregations and members of congregations are subject to discipline in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 20 of the ELCA constitution and bylaws.
- S13.40. Synodically Authorized Worshiping Communities**
- S13.41.** Authorized worshiping communities, acknowledged under criteria, policies, and procedures approved by the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, shall accept and adhere to the Confession of Faith and Statement of Purpose of this church, shall be served by leadership under the criteria of this church, and shall be subject to the discipline of this church.

## Chapter 14. ROSTERED MINISTERS

### S14.10 Ministers of Word and Sacrament

- †S14.11. The time and place of the ordination of those persons properly called to congregations or non-congregational service of this synod shall be authorized by the bishop of this synod.
- †S14.12. Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,
- a. Every minister of Word and Service shall:
    - 1) preach the Word;
    - 2) administer the sacraments;
    - 3) conduct public worship;
    - 4) provide pastoral care;
    - 5) seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel;
    - 6) impart knowledge of this church and its wider ministry through distribution of its communications and publications;
    - 7) witness to the Kingdom of God in the community, in the nation and abroad; and
    - 8) speak 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; and

- 5) endeavor to increase the support given by the congregation to the work of the ELCA churchwide organization and of this synod.

S14.02.05. Following the acceptance of a letter of call from a congregation and the pastor's installation into the pastoral office of that congregation, the pastor shall become a member of that congregation. In a parish of multiple congregations, the pastor shall hold membership in one of the congregations.

**S14.03.** The pastor shall (a) 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.

**S14.04.** Whenever members of a congregation move to such a distance that regular attendance at its services becomes impractical, it shall be the duty of the pastor to commend them, upon their consent, to the pastoral care of a Lutheran congregation nearer to their place of residence.

**S14.05.** Each ordained minister on the roster of this synod shall submit a report of his or her ministry to the bishop of the synod at least 90 days prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.

**†S14.16.** When a congregation of this church desires to call a pastor or a candidate for the ministry of Word and Sacrament of this church:

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

**S14.12.** No ordained minister shall accept a call in this synod without first conferring with the bishop of this synod. An ordained minister 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 chair 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 death or, following consultation with the synodical 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 shall personally investigate such conditions together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson.
- c. In case of alleged physical disability or mental incapacity under paragraph a.4) above, the bishop's committee shall obtain and document competent medical opinion concerning the pastor's condition. When a disability or incapacity is evident to the committee, the bishop of this synod may declare the pastorate vacant. When the pastorate is declared vacant, the Synod Council shall list the pastor on the roster of ministers of Word and Sacrament as disabled. Upon removal of the disability and restoration of 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 the 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 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/her hands in good order by a departing pastor before:
- a. installation in another call, or
  - b. approval of a request for change in roster status.
- †S14.22.** The pastor shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to a former congregation before:
- a. installation in another call, or
  - b. approval of a request for change in roster status.
- †S14.23.** During service to a congregation, an interim pastor shall have the rights and duties in the congregation of a regularly called pastor. The interim pastor may delegate the same in part to an interim supply pastor with the consent of the bishop of this synod. The interim pastor and any rostered minister who may assist shall refrain from exerting influence in the selection of a pastor. Upon completion of service, the interim pastor shall certify to the bishop of this synod that the parochial records, for the period for which the interim pastor was responsible, are in order.
- †S14.24.** With the approval of the synodical bishop expressed in writing which sets forth a clear statement of the purpose to be served by such a departure from the normal rule of permanency of the call as expressed in **†S14.18.**, a congregation may call a pastor for a specific term. Details of such calls shall be in writing setting forth the purpose and conditions involved. Prior to the completion of a term, the bishop of this synod or a representative of the bishop shall meet with the pastor and representatives of the

congregation for a review of the call. Such call may also be terminated before its expiration in accordance with the provisions of †S14.18.

**S14.25.** All ministers of Word and Sacrament under a call shall attend meetings of the Synod Assembly, and the pastors of congregations shall also attend the meetings of the conference.

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

†S14.31. The time and place of the consecration of those persons properly called to congregations or non-congregational service of this synod shall be authorized by the bishop of this synod.

†S14.32. Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, every 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 the ELCA and its wider ministry of the gospel, and advocate for the work of all expressions of this church; and
- i. Identify and encourage qualified persons to prepare for ministry of the gospel.

†S14.41. 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.

**†S14.43.**

- a. The call of a congregation, when accepted by a minister of Word and Service, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment which shall be terminated only by death or, following consultation with the synodical bishop, for the following reasons:
  - 6) mutual agreement to terminate the call or the completion of a call for a specific term;
  - 7) 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;
  - 8) inability to conduct the office effectively in that congregation in view of local conditions;
  - 9) physical disability or mental incapacity of the minister of Word and Service;
  - 10) suspension of the minister of Word and Service through discipline for more than three months;
  - 11) resignation or removal of the minister of Word and Service from the roster of ministers of Word and Service of this church;
  - 12) termination of the relationship between this church and the congregation;
  - 13) dissolution of the congregation or the termination of a parish arrangement; or
  - 14) suspension of the congregation through discipline for more

than six months.

- b. When allegations of physical disability or mental incapacity of the minister of Word and Service under paragraph a.4) above, or ineffective conduct of the ministry of Word and Service under paragraph a.3) above, have come to the attention of the bishop of this synod,
  - 1) the bishop in his or her sole discretion may investigate such conditions personally together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson, or
  - 2) when such allegations have been brought to the synod's attention by an official recital of allegations by the Congregation Council or by a petition signed by at least one-third of the voting members of the congregation, the bishop personally shall investigate such conditions together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson.
- c. In case of alleged physical disability or mental incapacity under paragraph a.4) above, the bishop's committee shall obtain and document competent medical opinion concerning the minister of Word and Service's condition. When a disability or incapacity is evident to the committee, the bishop of this synod may declare the position vacant and the minister of Word and Service shall be listed on the roster of ministers of Word and Service as disabled. Upon removal of the disability and restoration of the minister of Word and Service to health, the bishop shall take steps to enable the minister of Word and Service to resume the ministry, either in the congregation last served or in another appropriate call.
- d. In the case of alleged local difficulties that imperil the effective functioning of the congregation under paragraph a.3) above, the bishop's committee shall endeavor to hear from all concerned persons, after which the bishop together with the committee shall present their recommendations first to the minister of Word and Service and then to the congregation. The recommendations of the bishop's committee address whether the minister of Word and Service's call should come to an end and, if so, may suggest appropriate severance arrangements. The committee may also propose other actions that should be undertaken by the congregation and by the minister of Word and Service, if appropriate. If the minister of Word and Service and congregation agree to carry out such recommendations, no further action need be taken by the synod.

- e. If either party fails to assent to the recommendations of the bishop's committee concerning the minister of Word and Service's call, the congregation may dismiss the minister of Word and Service only at a legally called meeting after consultation with the bishop, either (a) by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee did not recommend termination of the call, or (b) by a majority vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee recommended termination of the call.
- f. If, in the course of proceedings described in paragraph c. or paragraph d. above, the bishop's committee concludes that there may be grounds for disciplinary action, the committee shall make recommendations concerning disciplinary action in accordance with the provisions of this church's constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.

**†S14.44.** Ministers of Word and Service shall respect the integrity of the ministry of congregations which they do not serve and shall not exercise ministerial functions therein unless invited to do so by the Congregation Council.

**†S14.45.** The minister of Word and Service shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to a former congregation before:

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

**†S14.46.** With the approval of the synodical bishop expressed in writing, which sets forth a clear statement of the purpose to be served by such a departure from the normal rule of permanency of the call as expressed in †S14.43., a congregation may call a minister of Word and Service for a specific term. Details of such calls shall be in writing setting forth the purpose and conditions involved. Prior to the completion of a term, the bishop of this synod or a representative of the bishop shall meet with the minister of Word and Service and representatives of the congregation for a review of the call. Such call may also be terminated before its expiration in accordance with the provisions of **†S14.43.**

## Chapter 15. FINANCIAL MATTERS

- †S15.01. The fiscal year of this synod shall be February 1 to January 31.
- †S15.11. Since the congregations, synods, and churchwide organization are interdependent units that share responsibly in God's mission, all share in the responsibility to develop, implement, and strengthen the financial support program of the whole church. The gifts and offerings of the members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America are given to support all parts of this church and thus partnership in this church should be evidenced in determining each part's share of the gifts and offerings. Therefore:
- a. The mission of this church beyond the congregation is to be supported by such a proportionate share of each congregation's annual budget as each congregation determines. This synod shall develop guidelines for determining "proportionate share," and shall consult with congregational leaders to assist each congregation in making its determination.
  - b. This synod shall receive the proportionate share of the mission support from its congregations, and shall transmit that percentage or amount of each congregation's mission support as determined in consultation with the churchwide organization and approved by the Synod Assembly as part of its budget consideration.
  - c. Should the Synod Assembly not approve the proportionate share of mission support determined in consultation with the churchwide organization, a new consultation with the churchwide organization shall take place. The Synod Council is authorized to amend the budget adopted by the Synod Assembly to reflect the results of this consultation.
- †S15.12. The annual budget of this synod shall reflect the entire range of its own activities and its commitment to partnership funding with other synods and the churchwide organization.
- S15.13. On the basis of estimated income, the Synod Council shall authorize expenditures within the budget for the fiscal year. Expenditure authorizations shall be subject to revision, in light of changing conditions, by the Synod Council.
- S15.13.01. The Synod Council shall have power to borrow money on such property as this synod may own or may hereafter acquire, and to authorize the execution of mortgages, bonds, warrants or other instruments of indebtedness therefore.

- S15.13.02. The Synod Council may authorize the sale, assignment or transfer of any property belonging to this synod.
- S15.13.03. The Synod Council may acquire such property as it may deem necessary to the work of the synod or its ultimate welfare.
- S15.13.04. The Synod Council shall have the power to reapportion all synodical items within the budget in order to meet properly the needs of the various agencies and objectives of this synod.
- S15.13.05. The Synod Council shall periodically cause a study to be made of the investments of this synod to determine whether such investments are consistent with Christian commitment to justice and business practice.
- S15.14.** Except when such procedure would jeopardize current operations, a reserve amounting to no more than 16% of the sum of the amounts scheduled in the next year's budget for regular distribution to synodical causes shall be carried forward annually for disbursement in the following year in the interest of making possible a more even flow of income to such causes. The exact number of dollars to be held in reserve shall be determined by the Synod Council.
- S15.21.** No appeal to congregations of this or any other synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for the raising of funds shall be conducted by congregations or organizations related to or affiliated with this synod without the consent of the Synod Assembly or the Synod Council.
- S15.21.A11. This synod authorizes the establishment of Gifts of Hope to increase understanding and strengthen relationships between the beneficiary organizations and the congregations of the Metropolitan Washington D.C. Synod and to raise funds for the beneficiary organizations. The Synod Council shall appoint an *ex-officio* member to the Gifts of Hope coordinating committee. The council shall approve any changes to this statement of purpose.
- †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 selected by the Synod Council. The audited annual financial report shall be submitted by this synod to the churchwide Office of the Treasurer and to the congregations of this synod. The financial reports shall be in the format approved from time to time by the churchwide Office of the Treasurer.
- †S15.32. This synod shall maintain adequate, continuous insurance coverage in accordance with standards recommended by the churchwide organization. Insurance programs offered or endorsed by the churchwide organization shall be deemed to fulfill this obligation.

## Chapter 16. INDEMNIFICATION

- †S16.01.** Subject to the limitations and duties imposed by law, each person who is or was made or threatened to be made a party to any proceeding by reason of the present or former capacity of that person as a Synod Council member, officer, employee, or committee member of this synod shall be indemnified against all costs and expenses incurred by that person in connection with the proceeding. Indemnification of any person by reason of that person's capacity as a director, officer, employee, or committee member or 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 (or whose duties in that position involve or involved service in the capacity of) a director, officer, partner, trustee, employee, or agent of another organization, is or was made or threatened to be made a party to a proceeding by reason of such capacity, then such person shall be entitled to indemnification only if (a) the Synod Council has established a process for determining whether a person serving in the capacity described in this section shall be entitled to indemnification in any specific case, and (b) that process has been applied in making a specific determination that such person is entitled to indemnification.
- †S16.03.** This synod may purchase and maintain insurance on behalf of itself or any person entitled to indemnification pursuant to this chapter against any liability asserted against and incurred by this synod or by such other person in or arising from a capacity described in section **†S16.01.** or section **†S16.02.**
- †S16.04.** When written charges against a rostered minister of this church are made

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

## Chapter 17. ADJUDICATION

- †S17.01. The synodical bishop and the Executive Committee of the Synod Council shall be available to give counsel when disputes arise within this synod.
- †S17.02. The synodical bishop and the Executive Committee of the Synod Council shall receive expressions of concern from rostered ministers of this church, congregations, and organizations within this synod; provide a forum in which the parties concerned can seek to work out matters causing distress or conflict; and make appropriate recommendations for their resolution. When the matter at issue cannot be resolved in this matter, the prescribed procedures for investigation, decision, appeal, and adjudication shall be followed. Allegations or charges that could lead to the discipline of a rostered minister of this church shall not be addressed by the Executive Committee but shall be resolved through the disciplinary process set forth in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*.
- †S17.03. When there is disagreement among units of this synod on a substantive issue that cannot be resolved by the parties, the aggrieved party or parties may appeal to the synodical bishop and the Executive Committee of the Synod Council for a consultation. If this consultation fails to resolve the issue, a petition may be addressed by the parties to the Synod Council requesting it to arbitrate the issue. The decision of the Synod Council shall be final.
- †S17.04. When a component or beneficiary of a synod has a disagreement on a substantive issue that it cannot resolve, it may address an appeal to the synodical bishop and the Executive Committee of the Synod Council. In this case the decision of the Executive Committee shall prevail, except that upon the motion of a member of the Synod Council, the decision shall be referred to the Synod Council for final action.
- †S17.10. **Adjudication in a Congregation**
- †S17.11. When there is disagreement among factions within a congregation on a substantive issue that cannot be resolved by the parties, members of a congregation shall have access to the synodical bishop for consultation after informing the chair of the Congregation Council of their intent. If the consultation fails to resolve the issue(s), the Consultation Committee of this synod shall consider the matter. If the Consultation Committee of this synod shall fail to resolve the issue(s), the matter shall be referred to the Synod Council, whose decision shall be final.

## Chapter 18. AMENDMENTS, BYLAWS, AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS

### †S18.10. Amendments to Constitution

†S18.11. Certain sections of this constitution incorporate and record therein required provisions of the constitution and bylaws of this church. If such provisions are amended by the Churchwide Assembly, corresponding amendments shall be introduced at once into this constitution by the secretary of this synod upon receipt of formal certification thereof from the secretary of Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

†S18.12. Whenever the secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America officially informs this synod that the Churchwide Assembly has amended the *Constitution for Synods*, this constitution may be amended to reflect any such amendment by a majority vote at any subsequent meeting of the Synod Assembly without presentation at a prior Synod Assembly. An amendment that is identical to a provision of the *Constitution for Synods* shall be deemed to have been ratified upon its adoption by this synod. The Church Council, through the secretary of this church, shall be given prompt notification of its adoption.

†S18.13. Other amendments to this constitution may be adopted by this synod through either of the following procedures:

- a. An amendment may be adopted by a two-thirds vote at a regular meeting of the Synod Assembly after having been presented in writing at the previous regular meeting of the Synod Assembly over the signatures of at least five members and been approved by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting at such a regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.
- b. The Synod Council may propose an amendment, with notice to be sent to the congregations of this synod at least six months prior to the next regular meeting of the Synod Assembly. Such an amendment shall require for adoption a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting at such a regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.

All such amendments shall become effective upon ratification by the Churchwide Assembly or by the Church Council.

### †S18.20. Amendments to Bylaws

†S18.21. This synod may adopt bylaws not in conflict with this constitution or with the constitution and bylaws of the churchwide organization. This synod may amend its bylaws at any meeting of the Synod Assembly by a two-thirds vote of voting members of the assembly present and voting. Newly

adopted bylaws and amendments to existing bylaws shall be reported to the secretary of this church.

**†S18.30. Amendments to Continuing Resolutions**

**†S18.31.** This synod may adopt continuing resolutions not in conflict with this constitution or its bylaws or the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of the churchwide organization. Such continuing resolutions may be adopted or amended by a majority vote of the Synod Assembly or by a two-thirds vote of Synod Council. Newly adopted continuing resolutions and amendments to existing continuing resolutions shall be reported to the secretary of this church.



**CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS**  
OF THE METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON, D.C. SYNOD,  
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

~~September 2016~~ June 2017 Edition

This edition of the Constitution and Bylaws of the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America supersedes all previous editions. It incorporates all amendments approved by the 2007, 2013, 2014, and 20142017 Synod Assemblies and by the 2007, 2009, 2011, 2013, and 2016 Churchwide Assemblies.

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

- a. The numbers of all constitutional provisions are printed in **boldface** type.
- b. The numbers of all bylaw provisions are printed in regular type.
- c. The numbers of all continuing resolution provisions are printed in *italics*.
- d. All numerical codification indicates general subject, constitutional provisions, bylaw provisions, and continuing resolutions. For example, **†S7.01.** is a constitutional provision dealing with the synod assembly; *S7.13.01.* is a bylaw also dealing with the synod assembly; while *S7.21.A92.* is a continuing resolution adopted in 1992 dealing with the allocation of lay members of the Synod Assembly.

All provisions mandated by the ELCA Constitution have a "†" before the numerical codification (e.g. **†S1.01.**).

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## Chapter 1. NAME AND INCORPORATION

- †S1.01. The name of this synod, as determined by the Churchwide Assembly, shall be Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- †S1.02. For the purposes of this constitution and the accompanying bylaws, the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. 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 cross with three united flames emanating from the base of the cross and three entwined circles beside the cross. The name of this synod and the year of its constituting convention form the circular outer edge of the seal.

## Chapter 2. STATUS

- †S2.01. This synod possesses the powers conferred upon it, and accepts the duties and responsibilities assigned to it, in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, which are recognized as having governing force in the life of this synod.
- †S2.02. The name Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA or “this church”) as used herein refers in general references to this whole church, including its three expressions: congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization. The name Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is also the name of the corporation of the churchwide organization to which specific references may be made herein.
- †S2.03. No provision of this constitution shall be inconsistent with the constitution and bylaws of this church.
- S2.04. This synod shall be the successor in law and in fact of those portions of the jurisdictional units of the American Lutheran Church, the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches, and the Lutheran Church in America previously located on its territory, and shall assume all the privileges and obligations of its predecessors.

### Chapter 3. TERRITORY

- †S3.01. The territory of this synod, as determined by the Churchwide Assembly, shall be the District of Columbia; the counties of Calvert, Charles, Montgomery, Prince Georges, and St. Mary's in the State of Maryland; the counties of Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun, Prince William and the independent cities of Falls Church and Fairfax City within these counties, and the independent City of Alexandria in the Commonwealth of Virginia; Bermuda.
- †S3.02. "Determined by the Churchwide Assembly," as stipulated by †S3.01., is understood to include the reported changes in synod relationship made by any congregation in a border area agreed under ELCA bylaws 10.01.01. and 10.02.02.

## Chapter 4. CONFESSION OF FAITH

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

## Chapter 5. NATURE OF THE CHURCH

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

## Chapter 6. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

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

- c. Strengthen interdependent relationships among congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization, and foster relationships with agencies and institutions affiliated with or related to this church as well as ecumenical partners.
- d. Interpret the work of this church to congregations and to the public on the territory of the synod.

**†S6.03.01.** In providing for pastoral care of congregations and rostered ministers in the synod, the responsibilities of the synod include the following:

- a. providing for pastoral care of congregations, ministers of Word and Sacrament, and ministers of Word and Service in the synod, including:
  - 1) approving candidates for the ministry of Word and Sacrament in cooperation with the appropriate seminaries of this church, which may be done through multi-synodical committees;
  - 2) authorizing ordinations and ordaining ministers of Word and Sacrament on behalf of this church;
  - 3) approving ministers of Word and Service, which may be done through multi-synodical committees;
  - 4) authorizing consecrations and consecrating ministers of Word and Service on behalf of this church; and
  - 5) consulting in the call process for rostered ministers.
- b. providing for leadership recruitment, preparation, and support in accordance with churchwide standards and policies, including:
  - 1) nurturing and supporting congregations and lay leaders;
  - 2) seeking and recruiting qualified candidates for the rostered ministries of this church;
  - 3) making provision for pastoral care, call review, and guidance;
  - 4) encouraging and supporting persons on the rosters of this church in stewardship of their abilities, care of self, and pursuit of continuing education to undergird their effectiveness of service; and

- 5) supporting recruitment of leaders for this church's colleges, universities, seminaries, and social ministry organizations.
- c. providing for discipline of congregations, ministers of Word and Sacrament, and ministers of Word and Service; as well as for termination of call, appointment, adjudication, and appeals consistent with Chapter 20 of this church's constitution.
- d. providing for archives in conjunction with other synods.

**†S6.03.02.** In planning for, facilitating, and nurturing of 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 partnerships with other synods in the region;
- b. fostering organizations for youth, women, and men, and organizations for language or ethnic communities;

- c. developing relationships with social ministry organizations and ministries, participating in their mission planning, and providing partnership funding;
- d. supporting relationships with and providing partnership funding on behalf of colleges, universities, and campus ministries;
- e. maintaining relationships with and providing partnership funding on behalf of seminaries and continuing education centers;
- f. fostering supporting relationships with camps and other outdoor ministries;
- g. fostering supporting relationships with preschools, elementary schools, and secondary schools operated by congregations of the synod;
- h. fostering relationships with ecumenical and global partners;
- i. cooperating with other synods and the churchwide organization in creating, using, and supporting regions to carry out those functions of the synod which can best be done cooperatively with other synods and the churchwide organization.

**†S6.03.04.** In interpreting the work of this church on the territory of the synod, the responsibilities of the synod include the following:

- a. encouraging financial support for the work of this church by individuals and congregations;
- b. participating in churchwide programs;
- c. interpreting social statements in a manner consistent with the interpretation given by the churchwide unit or office which assisted in the development of the statement, and suggestion of social study issues;
- d. providing ecumenical guidance and encouragement.

**†S6.04.** Except as otherwise provided in this constitution and bylaws, the Synod Council shall establish processes that will ensure that at least 60 percent of the members of the synod assemblies, councils, committees, boards, and other organizational units shall be lay persons; and that, as nearly as possible, 50 percent of the lay members of assemblies, councils, committees, boards, or other organizational units shall be female and 50 percent shall be male; and that, where possible, the representation of ministers of Word and Sacrament shall be both male and female. This

synod shall establish processes that will enable it to reach a minimum goal that 10 percent of its assemblies, councils, committees, boards, or other organizational units be persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English.

- †S6.04.01. It is the goal of this synod that 10 percent of the membership of synod assemblies, councils, committees, boards and/or other organizational units be persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English.
- †S6.04.02. It is the goal of this synod that at least 10 percent of the voting members of the Synod Assembly, Synod Council, committees, and organizational units of this synod be youth and young adults. The Synod Council shall establish a plan for implementing this goal. For purposes of the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of this synod, the term "youth" means a voting member of a congregation who has not reached the age of 18 at the time of election or appointment for service. The term "young adult" means a voting member of a congregation between the ages of 18 and 30 at the time of election or appointment for service.
- †S6.05. Each assembly, council, committee, board, commission, task force, or other body of this synod or any synodical units shall be conclusively presumed to have been properly constituted, and neither the method of selection nor the composition of any such assembly, council, committee, board, commission, task force, or other body may be challenged in a court of law by any person or be used as the basis of a challenge in a court of law to the validity or effect of any action taken or authorized by any such assembly, council, committee, board, commission, task force, or other body.
- †S6.06. References herein to the nature of the relationship between the three expressions of this church—congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization—as being interdependent or as being in a partnership relationship describe the mutual responsibility of these expressions in God's mission and the fulfillment of the purposes of this church as described in this chapter, and do not imply or describe the creation of partnerships, co-ventures, agencies, or other legal relationships recognized in civil law.

## Chapter 7. SYNOD ASSEMBLY

- †S7.01. This synod shall have a Synod Assembly, which shall be its highest legislative authority. The powers of the Synod Assembly are limited only by the provisions in the Articles of Incorporation, this constitution and bylaws, the assembly's own resolutions, and the constitutions and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- †S7.11. A regular meeting of the Synod Assembly shall be held at least triennially.
- S7.12. Special meetings of the Synod Assembly may be called by the bishop with the consent of the Synod Council, and shall be called by the bishop at the request of one-fifth of the voting members of the Synod Assembly.
- a. The notice of each special meeting shall define the purpose for which it is to be held. The scope of actions to be taken at such a special meeting shall be limited to the subject matter(s) described in the notice.
  - b. If the special meeting of the Synod Assembly is required for the purpose of electing a successor bishop because of death, resignation, or inability to serve, the special meeting shall be called by the Synod Council after consultation with the presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- S7.13. Notice of the time and place of all meetings of the Synod Assembly shall be given by the secretary of this synod.
- S7.13.01. The secretary shall give written notice to the membership of the time and place of all meetings of the Synod Assembly at least 30 days in advance of the meeting.
- S7.13.02. The secretary shall provide the membership with all reports and recommendations to be considered at a regular meeting of the Synod Assembly at least 10 days in advance of the meeting.
- S7.13.A14 All recommendations and resolutions of units of this synod, the Synod Council, as well as those from affiliated or related agencies of this synod, upon which Synod Assembly action is requested shall be submitted to the Secretary of the Synod no later than March 1, or 60 days before the opening of the assembly.
- S7.13.B14 Resolutions may be received from voting members to the assembly, congregation councils, tables, teams, and affiliated agencies and institutions. Conferences may present resolutions through the signature of delegates, clergy or lay, or through congregation councils.

- S7.14.** One-half of the members of the Synod Assembly shall constitute a quorum.
- †S7.21.** The membership of the Synod Assembly, of which at least 60 percent of the voting membership shall be composed of laypersons, shall be constituted as follows:
- 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, in addition to the voting membership of lay members of congregations provided in item **†S7.21.c.**
  - c. A minimum of one lay member elected by each congregation with fewer than 175 baptized members and a minimum of two lay members elected by each congregation with more than 175 baptized members related to this synod, one of whom shall be male and one of whom shall be female, shall be voting members. The Synod Council shall establish a formula to provide additional lay representation from congregations on the basis of number of members in the congregation. The Synod Council shall seek to ensure that, as nearly as possible, 50 percent of the lay members of the assembly shall be female and 50 percent shall be male. Additional members from each congregation normally shall be equally divided between male and female.
  - d. Voting membership shall include the officers of this synod.
- †S7.21.01.** 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.A92.** For the allocation of lay members of the Synod Assembly the most current church body statistics are the basis for determining baptized members. To achieve the proper ratio, each congregation of 450 baptized members will be entitled to an additional voting member and another voting member for each full 250 members over 450.
- S7.21.02.** Congregations with a baptized membership which consists of at least 10% persons of color and/or whose primary language is other than English will be entitled to one additional member. That member will be a person of color or whose primary language is other than English.
- S7.22.** This synod may establish processes that permit retired ~~ordained ministers,~~

~~retired associates in ministry, retired deaconesses, and retired diaconal ministers~~ rostered ministers, or those designated as disabled, or on leave from call, on the roster of the synod to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, consistent with ~~†S7.21.c. above.~~ ~~The synod may establish processes that permit ordained ministers, associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers who are on leave from call, or those designated as disabled, on the roster of the synod to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, consistent with †S7.21.c. above.~~ If the synod does not establish processes to permit the rostered ~~leaders~~ ministers specified above to serve as voting members, they shall have voice but not vote in the meetings of the Synod Assembly.

S7.22.01. ~~Retired ordained ministers, retired associates in ministry, retired deaconesses and retired diaconal~~ Retired rostered ministers on the roster of this synod shall have voice and vote at Synod Assemblies.

S7.23. The presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and such other official representatives of this church as may be designated from time to time by the Church Council shall have voice but not vote in the meetings of the Synod Assembly. Like privileges shall be accorded to those additional persons whom the Synod Assembly or the Synod Council shall from time to time designate.

S7.24. ~~Ordained ministers~~ Ministers under call on the ~~roster~~ rosters of this synod shall remain as members of the Synod Assembly so long as they remain under call and so long as their names appear on the ~~roster of ordained ministers of this synod. Associates in ministry, deaconesses of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and diaconal ministers of this church serving under call on the roster of this synod shall remain as members of the Synod Assembly so long as they remain under call and so long as their names appear on the official lay roster of this synod.~~ rosters of this synod. Lay members of the Synod Assembly representing congregations shall continue as such until replaced by the election of new members or until they have been disqualified by termination of membership. Normally, congregations will hold elections prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.

†S7.25. Except as otherwise provided in this constitution or in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions* of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, each voting member of the Synod Assembly shall be a voting member of a congregation of this synod.

S7.26. This synod may establish processes through the Synod Council that permit representatives of congregations under development and authorized worshiping communities of the synod, under ELCA bylaw 10.02.03., to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, consistent with ~~†S7.21.~~

- S7.26.01. Authorized worshiping communities of this synod shall each be allocated a maximum of two voting members of the Synod Assembly.
- S7.27.** This synod may establish processes through the Synod Council to grant ~~an~~ ordained 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 ~~ordained~~ minister's service in a congregation of this church.
- S7.27.01. An ordained minister 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 shall have the privilege of both voice and vote in the Synod Assembly during the period of that ordained minister's service in a congregation of this church upon the recommendation of the bishop and the approval of the Synod Council.
- S7.28.** Duly elected voting members of the Synod Council who are not otherwise voting members of the Synod Assembly under **†S7.21.** shall be granted the privilege of both voice and vote as members of the Synod Assembly.
- †S7.31.** Proxy and absentee voting shall not be permitted in the transaction of any business of this synod.
- S7.32.** *Robert's Rules of Order*, latest edition, shall govern parliamentary procedure of the Synod Assembly, unless otherwise ordered by the assembly.
- S7.32.01. Special rules of procedure may be adopted at the beginning of each regular or special meeting of the Synod Assembly as long as they are not in conflict with *Robert's Rules of Order*, latest edition.
- S7.33.** "Ex officio" as used herein means membership with full rights of voice and vote unless otherwise expressly limited.

## Chapter 8. OFFICERS

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

### S8.10. Bishop

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

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

- a. Preach, teach, and administer the sacraments in accord with the Confession of Faith of this church.
- b. Have primary responsibility for the ministry of Word and Sacrament in this synod and its congregations, providing pastoral care and leadership for this synod, its congregations, its ministers of Word and Sacrament, and its ministers of Word and Service.
- c. Exercise solely this church's power to ordain (or provide for the ordination by another synodical bishop of) approved candidates who have received and accepted a properly issued, duly attested letter of call for the office of ministry of Word and Sacrament (and as provided in the bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America).
- d. Consecrate (or provide for the consecration of) approved candidates who have received and accepted a properly issued, duly attested letter of call for service as ministers of Word and Service.
- e. Attest letters of call for persons called to serve congregations in the synod, letters of call for persons called by the Synod Council, and letters of call for persons on the rosters of this synod called by the Church Council.
- f. Install (or provide for the installation of) rostered ministers whose calls the bishop has attested.
- g. Exercise leadership in the mission of this church and in so doing:
  - 1) Interpret and advocate the mission and theology of the whole church;
  - 2) Lead in fostering support for and commitment to the mission

- of this church within this synod;
- 3) Coordinate the use of the resources available to this synod as it seeks to promote the health of this church's life and witness in the areas served by this synod;
  - 4) Submit a report to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly concerning the synod's life and work; and
  - 5) Advise and counsel this synod's related institutions and organizations.
- h. Practice leadership in strengthening the unity of the Church and in so doing:
- 1) Exercise oversight of the preaching, teaching, and administration of the sacraments within this synod in accord with the Confession of Faith of this church;
  - 2) Be responsible for administering the constitutionally established process for the resolution of controversies and for the discipline of rostered ministers and congregations of this synod;
  - 3) Be the chief ecumenical officer of this synod;
  - 4) Consult regularly with other synodical bishops and the Conference of Bishops;
  - 5) Foster awareness of other churches throughout the Lutheran world communion and, where appropriate, engage in contact with leaders of those churches;
  - 6) Cultivate communion in faith and mission with appropriate Christian judicatory leaders functioning within the territory of this synod; and
  - 7) Be *ex officio* a member of the Churchwide Assembly.
- i. Oversee and administer the work of this synod and in so doing:
- 1) Serve as the president of the synod corporation and be the chief executive and administrative officer of this synod, who is authorized and empowered, in the name of this synod, to sign deeds or other instruments and to affix the seal of this synod;

- 2) Preside at all meetings of the Synod Assembly and provide for the preparation of the agenda for the Synod Assembly, Synod Council, and the council's Executive Committee;
- 3) Ensure that the constitution and bylaws of the synod and of the churchwide organization are duly observed within this synod, and that the actions of the synod in conformity therewith are carried into effect;
- 4) Exercise supervision over the work of the other officers;
- 5) Coordinate the work of all synodical staff members;
- 6) Appoint all committees for which provision is not otherwise made;
- 7) Be a member of all committees and any other organizational units of the synod, except as otherwise provided in this constitution;
- 8) Provide for preparation and maintenance of synodical rosters containing the names and addresses of all rostered ministers of this synod and a record of the calls under which they are serving or the date on which they become retired or disabled;
- 9) Annually bring to the attention of the Synod Council the names of all rostered ministers on leave from call or engaged in approved graduate study in conformity with the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of this church and pursuant to prior action of this synod through the Synod Council;
- 10) Provide for prompt reporting to the secretary of this church of:
  - a) additions to and subtractions from the rosters of this synod and the register of congregations;
  - b) the issuance of certificates of transfer for rostered ministers in good standing who have received and accepted a properly issued, duly attested, regular letter of call under the jurisdiction of another synod; and
  - c) the entrance of the names of such persons for whom proper certificates of transfer have been received;

- 11) Provide for preparation and maintenance of a register of the congregations of this synod and the names of the laypersons who have been elected to represent them; and
- 12) Appoint a statistician of the synod, who shall secure the parochial reports of the congregations and make the reports available to the secretary of this church for collation, analysis, and distribution of the statistical summaries to this synod and the other synods of this church.

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

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

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

**†S8.16. Conflicts of Interest**

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

- a. Whenever a synodical bishop determines that a matter of the kind described in **†S8.16.01.b.** may require his or her determination or action with respect to a related individual as defined in **†S8.16.01.c.**, the synodical bishop shall withdraw from personal involvement in such matter and shall so notify the presiding bishop. The presiding bishop shall then appoint another synodical bishop from the same region to handle the matter to conclusion. In dealing with such matter, the appointed bishop shall exercise all of the functions and authority to the same extent as if the appointed bishop were the elected bishop of the withdrawing bishop's synod.

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

**S8.20. Vice President**

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

S8.21.01. The vice president will serve as a member *ex officio* of all Churchwide Assemblies.

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

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

**S8.30. Secretary**

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

†S8.32. The secretary shall:

- a. Keep the minutes of all meetings of the Synod Assembly and Synod Council, be responsible for the printing and distribution of such minutes, and perform such other duties as this synod may from time to time direct.

- b. Be authorized and empowered, in the name of this synod, to attest all instruments which require the same, and which are signed and sealed by the bishop.
- c. In consultation with the bishop, classify and arrange all important papers and documents and deposit them in the archives of this synod.
- d. Submit to the secretary of this church at least nine months before each regular Churchwide Assembly a certified list of the voting members elected by the Synod Assembly.

**S8.40. Treasurer**

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

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

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

Council, which shall be in the custody of the secretary, and the premium therefor 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:

- a. The bishop of this synod shall be elected to a term of six years and may be re-elected.
- b. The vice president and secretary of this synod shall be elected to a term of four years and may be re-elected.
- c. The treasurer of this synod shall be elected or appointed to a four-year term and may be re-elected or reappointed.

S8.52. The terms of newly elected officers shall begin on September 1 immediately following election.

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

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

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

Council, the Synod Council shall appoint a new treasurer to a four-year term.

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

**†S8.57.** The recall or dismissal of an officer and the vacating of office may be effected for willful disregard or violation of the constitutions, 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 synodical bishop shall be instituted by written petition by:
  - 1) the Synod Council on an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of its elected members present and voting;
  - 2) the Synod Assembly on an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of its members present and voting;
  - 3) at least 10 synodical bishops; or
  - 4) the presiding bishop of this church.
- b. Proceedings for the recall or dismissal of an officer of a synod, other than the synodical bishop, shall be instituted by written petition by:
  - 1) the Synod Council on an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of its elected members present and voting;
  - 2) the Synod Assembly on an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of its members present and voting; or
  - 3) the synodical bishop.
- c. The petition shall be filed with the chair of the Committee on Appeals (in care of the secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 8765 West Higgins Road, Chicago, Illinois 60631) and shall set forth the specific charge or charges.

- d. Upon the filing of a written petition, the Executive Committee of the Synod Council may temporarily suspend the officer from service in the synod without prejudice, but with continuation of compensation, including benefits, if the officer is a salaried employee of the synod.
- e. In the case of alleged physical or mental incapacity of an officer of the synod, the procedures outlined in **†S8.56**. shall be followed, and such officer shall comply with the decision of the Synod Council. If such officer fails or refuses to comply, the Synod Council may proceed to petition for recall or dismissal as follows:
  - 1) the Synod Council will submit a written report of their findings and the basis of their decision to the Committee on Appeals.
  - 2) the Committee on Appeals, other than those who are disqualified, shall review the findings and decision of the Synod Council and by an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of those present and voting may adopt the findings and grant the petition.
- f. If the synod officer is a minister of Word and Sacrament, grounds for recall or dismissal include those set forth in ELCA bylaw 20.21.01. and as defined under the process described in ELCA constitutional provisions 20.20. and 20.21. as grounds for discipline. If the officer is a minister of Word and Service, grounds for recall or dismissal include those set forth in ELCA bylaw 20.22.01. and as defined under the process described in ELCA constitutional provisions 20.20. and 20.21. as grounds for discipline.
- g. If the officer is a layperson, grounds for recall or dismissal include those set forth in ELCA bylaw 20.41.01. as grounds for discipline.
- h. If the case of alleged willful disregard or violation of the constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions or of alleged conduct as would subject the officer to disciplinary action, the following procedures shall apply:
  - 1) the petition shall be referred to the Committee on Appeals, which shall function as the discipline hearing committee that shall conduct a hearing in accordance with the rules provided for in ELCA bylaw 20.21.16. except to the extent that those rules are in conflict with the provisions of this bylaw; and
  - 2) the members of the Committee on Appeals, other than

those who are disqualified, may grant the petition by an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of those present and voting.

- i. Written notice of a decision by the Committee on Appeals that the charges have been sustained shall be given to the affected officer and to the Synod Council, and the office shall be vacated.

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

## Chapter 9. NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

- †S9.01. The Synod Assembly shall elect such officers of this synod and such other persons as the constitution and bylaws may require, according to procedures set forth in the bylaws. The Synod Assembly shall elect members of the Churchwide Assembly in accordance with bylaw 12.41.11. of the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- †S9.02. 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 appointed by the Synod Council to serve for each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly. Additional nominations may be made from the floor for all elections for which nominations are made by the Nominating Committee.
- S9.03.01. The Nominating Committee shall be composed of the six conference deans and five lay at-large members. The lay and clergy makeup of this committee should be in the spirit of **S6.04** and **S7.21** of the Constitution.
- S9.04. The bishop shall be elected by the Synod Assembly by ecclesiastical ballot. Three-fourths of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election on the first ballot. If no one is elected, the first ballot shall be considered the nominating ballot. Three-fourths of the legal votes cast on the second ballot shall be necessary for election. The third ballot shall be limited to the seven persons (plus ties) who received the greatest number of legal votes on the second ballot, and two-thirds of the 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% 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 votes on the previous ballot.
- 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 Nominating Committee shall nominate at least one person for secretary; additional nominations may be made from the floor.
- S9.07. The Nominating Committee shall nominate at least one person for treasurer; additional nominations may be made from the floor.
- S9.08. In all elections, except for the bishop, the names of the persons receiving the highest number of votes, but not elected by a majority of the 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.

**S9.11.** The Synod Council shall elect or appoint representative(s) to the steering committee of its region.

S9.11.01. The Synod Council shall appoint from its membership representative(s) to the coordinating council of its regional center for mission.

**†S9.12.** Background checks and screening shall be required and completed for persons nominated as synodical officers prior to their election, if possible, or as soon as practical after their election. The specific procedures and timing of background checks and screening shall be determined by the Synod Council.

## Chapter 10. SYNOD COUNCIL

- †S10.01. The Synod Council, consisting of the four officers of the synod, 10 to 24 other members, and at least one youth and at least one young adult, shall be elected by the Synod Assembly.
- a. Each person elected to the Synod Council shall be a voting member of a congregation of this synod, with the exception of ministers on a roster of this synod who reside outside the territory of this synod. The process for election and the term of office when not otherwise provided shall be specified in the bylaws. A member of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, unless otherwise elected as a voting member of the Synod Council, may serve as an advisory member of the Synod Council with voice but not vote.
  - b. The term of office of members of the Synod Council, with the exception of the officers and the youth member, shall be two years.
- †S10.02. The Synod Council shall be the board of directors of this synod and shall serve as its interim legislative authority between meetings of the Synod Assembly. It may make decisions 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 ~~ordained~~ ministers of Word and of other official rosters~~Sacrament and the roster of ministers of Word and Service~~, receive and act upon appropriate recommendations regarding those persons whose status is subject to reconsideration and action under the constitution and bylaws of the ELCA Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and make a report to the Synod Assembly of the Synod Council's actions in this regard.
  - e. Issue letters of call to ~~ordained ministers and letters of call to associates in ministry, members of the Deaconess Community of~~

~~the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and diaconal~~rostered ministers as authorized by Chapter 7 of the constitution and bylaws of the ~~ELCA~~Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

- f. Fill vacancies until the next regular meeting of the Synod Assembly, except as may otherwise be provided in the constitution or bylaws of this synod, and determine the fact of the incapacity of an officer of this synod.
- g. Report its actions to the regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.
- h. Perform such other functions as are set forth in the bylaws of this synod, or as may be delegated to it by the Synod Assembly.

**S10.04.** When requests for appropriations or changes to the recommended appropriations are made from the floor of the Synod Assembly, they shall be referred to the Synod Council. If its report on the request is favorable, a ~~simple~~ majority of the members voting shall be required for adoption; but if its report is unfavorable, a two-thirds vote of the members voting shall be required for adoption. Any request to increase the budget presented by the Synod Council must be accompanied by a statement detailing the source of the necessary revenue.

**S10.05.** No elected member of the Synod Council shall receive compensation for such service.

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

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

S10.07.01. To the extent permitted by state law, meetings of the Synod Council and its committees may be held electronically or by telephone conference, and notice of all meetings may be provided electronically.

S10.07.02. The Synod Council shall consist of the four officers of this synod; one ~~pastor~~minister of Word and Sacrament and one ~~lay person~~layperson from each of this synod's conferences; four members elected at-large, one of whom shall be ~~an associate in ministry, deaconess or diaconal~~a minister of Word and Service; one member from the youth organization; and one member from the Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America on the territory of this synod. ~~The~~ ~~pastor~~minister of Word and ~~lay person~~Sacrament and layperson for each conference shall be members

from different congregations.

- S10.07.03. The representatives of the conferences to the Synod Council shall be elected by the Synod Assembly from nominations made from the conferences. At least one nominee shall be given for each representative from the conferences. The members-at-large shall be elected by the Synod Assembly from the nominees presented by the Nominating Committee. The youth representative shall be elected by the Synod Assembly from the nomination made by the youth organization. The representative from the Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America on the territory of this synod shall be elected by the Synod Assembly from the nomination made by the women's organization. The term of office shall be two years and she would be eligible for two successive terms.
- S10.07.04. The representatives from the conferences and the members elected at large shall be elected for a term of two years and are eligible for two full successive terms. Terms of office shall be staggered so that terms of one-half of the clergy representatives and the terms of one-half of the lay representatives shall expire each year. Within each conference, the clergy and lay terms shall expire in alternate years. The terms of one-half of the at-large members shall expire each year.
- S10.07.05. The Synod Council shall meet at least four times annually. Special meetings may be called by the bishop and shall be called by the bishop at the request of six members of the Synod Council.
- S10.07.06. There shall be an Executive Committee which shall consist of the bishop, vice president, secretary, treasurer, and four members of the Synod Council. Of the four members elected by the Synod Council, no more than one shall be from the same conference. The Executive Committee shall exercise such powers as delegated by the Synod Council.
- S10.07.07. The Synod Council shall assist the life and mission of this synod through oversight, coordination, and support of all the tables, teams, and committees of this synod. Whenever a table, team, or committee fails to fulfill its responsibilities, the Synod Council shall first encourage the leadership of said table, team, or committee to fulfill their responsibilities before exercising its own oversight obligation.
- S10.07.08. Any activity or responsibility of this synod not defined or specified for any officer, table, team, and committee shall be the responsibility of the Synod Council.
- S10.07.09. The Synod Council, upon recommendation of the bishop, shall appoint an archivist for this synod.

S10.07.10. ~~No~~Except for the Primary Mission Table, no member of the Synod Council shall simultaneously serve as chair of a synodical table.

## Chapter 11. COMMITTEES AND ORGANIZATIONAL UNITS

- †S11.01. There shall be an Executive Committee, a Consultation Committee, a Committee on Discipline, a Mutual Ministry Committee, an Audit Committee, and such other committees as this synod may from time to time determine. The duties and functions of such committees, or any other organizational units created by this synod, and the composition and organizational structure of such units, shall be as set forth in this constitution or in the bylaws or continuing resolutions, and shall be subject to any applicable provisions or requirements of the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- S11.01.01. The work of this synod shall be carried out by its organizational units. Unless otherwise provided, membership of each organizational unit shall consist of the chairperson and at least two other persons. The bishop of this synod shall be an *ex-officio* member of all organizational units. Each organizational unit shall report to the Synod Council.
- S11.01.02. Each organizational unit may, with the approval of the Synod Council, form necessary subcommittees to carry out their purposes and responsibilities and appoint members thereof without restriction as to number.
- S11.01.03. *Robert's Rules of Order*, latest edition, shall govern parliamentary procedure of the Synod Council, organizational units, and official business meetings of the conferences.
- S11.01.10. TABLES
- S11.01.11. A table is an organizational unit of the synod which has been designated by the Synod Council.
- S11.01.12. Members of tables are appointed by the bishop unless their membership is provided for elsewhere in the constitution or bylaws. The Synod's Director for Evangelical Mission shall be an *ex-officio* member of all tables-[other than the Primary Mission Table](#).
- S11.01.13. There shall be a Primary Mission Table, which shall be the Synod Council. This table shall be responsible for the overall Mission Strategy of the synod that makes and grows disciples of Jesus Christ. The Primary Mission Table shall make decisions regarding the funding of synodical initiatives, starting new congregations, and opening missions, and may make recommendations to the Synod Assembly. This table shall be accountable to the Synod Assembly. Membership and meetings shall be identical to those of the Synod Council.

- S11.01.14. There shall be a New and Renewing Mission Table, which shall develop and renew existing congregations in the synod for the purpose of making and growing disciples of Jesus Christ. This table shall make decisions regarding budgeted and dedicated mission funds and make recommendations to the Synod Council regarding strategies involving new and existing congregations. This table shall be accountable to the bishop and to the Synod Council.
- S11.01.15. There shall be a Stewardship and Mission Support Table, which shall assist congregations in their ongoing stewardship ministries that make and grow disciples of Jesus Christ, and shall provide leadership in developing a unified mission funding strategy for all synodical, churchwide, and cooperative ministries. This table shall communicate and interpret the mission work of this, and shall oversee Gifts of Hope. This table shall be accountable to the bishop and to the Synod Council.
- S11.01.20. TEAMS
- S11.01.21. A team is an organizational unit of the synod whose work is directed toward a specific issue, initiative, or focus in the life of the synod. A team may be organized as a standing body or as a single-task, temporary body. A recognized synod team shall have the cognizance, consent, and approved resources to perform activities and make recommendations to others in the specific area for which it was organized.
- S11.01.22. A team shall apply to the Synod Council for recognition and support, proposing its own mission, structure, duration, and membership. Where possible, the team's membership shall be consistent with membership principles expressed in **†S6.04**.
- S11.01.23. A team shall report to the Synod Council at least once each year or as otherwise directed by the Synod Council. Teams may carry out their tasks in concert with synod tables, committees, and other teams. The Synod Council may rescind a team's organizational unit status at any time. A team may end its own organizational unit status at any time by notification to the Synod Council.
- S11.01.30. COMMITTEES
- S11.01.31. A committee is an organizational unit of this synod which is given the responsibility for a specific task or function.
- S11.01.32. In addition to the committees identified in **†S11.01**, committees may include a Candidacy Committee, an Ecumenical Affairs Committee, a Finance Committee, a Global Mission Committee (with companion synod subcommittees and working groups established in cooperation with

churchwide global mission partners), a Personnel Committee, and a Youth Ministry Committee. Additional committees may be established as necessary by the Synod Assembly, the Synod Council, or the bishop, and shall report to the electing or appointing organizational unit.

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

S11.02.01. The Consultation Committee shall be composed of 12 members, six ~~ordained~~ ministers of Word and Sacrament and six laypersons. The terms of committee members shall be staggered so that the terms of four members (two ~~ordained~~ ministers of Word and Sacrament and two laypersons) shall expire every two years in even numbered years.

**†S11.03.** The Committee on Discipline of this synod shall consist of 12 persons, of whom six shall be ministers of Word and Sacrament and six shall be laypersons, who shall each be elected by the Synod Assembly for a term of six years without consecutive re-election.

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

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

S11.03.01. The terms of office for members of the Committee on Discipline shall be staggered ~~so-arranged~~ that the terms of four members (two ~~clergy~~ ministers of Word and Sacrament and two ~~lay~~ laypersons) shall expire every two years in odd numbered years.

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

S11.04.01. The committee, composed of five persons, shall seek to give encouragement by its concern for the spiritual, emotional and physical well-being of the bishop and staff persons of this synod. It will offer support when they are experiencing personal or pastoral stress. It will allow for open communication concerning attitudes and conditions within this

synod.

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

**S11.10.** General Provisions

**S11.11.** This synod shall in its bylaws or by continuing resolution establish a process to ensure that the members of its committees and other organizational units will be persons possessing the necessary knowledge and competence to be effective members of such units, and to meet the requirements of **†S6.04**. With the exception of ~~ordained~~ ministers on the ~~roster~~rosters of this synod who reside outside the territory of this synod, each member of a committee of this synod, or any other organizational unit created by this synod, shall be a voting member of the congregation of this synod.

## Chapter 12. CONFERENCES, CLUSTERS, COALITIONS, AREA SUBDIVISIONS, AND NETWORKS

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

S12.01.01. There shall be six conferences in this synod designated as follows:

- a. The Virginia Conference which shall include all congregations in Loudoun County and that area of Fairfax County north of Interstate 66 in the Commonwealth of Virginia.
- b. The Fairfax Conference which shall include all congregations in Prince William County. It shall also include that area of Fairfax County south of Interstate 66 and west of Interstate 495, and west of Interstate 95 in the Commonwealth of Virginia.
- c. The Potomac Conference which shall include all congregations in Arlington County, the City of Alexandria and those areas of Fairfax County, south of Interstate 66 and east of Interstate 495, and east of Interstate 95 in the Commonwealth of Virginia.
- d. The District of Columbia Conference which shall include all congregations in the District of Columbia, and Bermuda.
- e. The Montgomery Conference which shall include all congregations in Montgomery County in the State of Maryland.
- f. The Maryland Conference which shall include all congregations in Prince George's, Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's counties in the State of Maryland.

S12.01.02. Congregations which are located in close proximity to the territory of another conference may apply to the Synod Council for a transfer to that conference. The Synod Council shall provide a hearing for the appropriate leadership of the petitioning congregation and shall upon due consideration report its actions to that congregation.

S12.01.03. Each conference shall elect from its ~~pastors~~ministers of Word and Sacrament a dean, and from among its ~~pastors~~ministers of Word and Sacrament or lay members a secretary under procedures established by each conference. They shall serve two-year terms and are eligible for two full consecutive terms.

- S12.01.04. Each conference shall hold meetings of its ~~ordained~~ ministers, ~~rostered lay~~ of Word and Sacrament, ministers of Word and Service, and lay delegates at least twice a year. The meeting prior to the Synod Assembly shall be the annual meeting for the conference. Special meetings may be called by the bishop of this synod or by the dean of the conference in consultation with the bishop and shall be called by the dean upon the request of one-fifth of the number of the ~~ordained~~ ministers, ~~rostered lay~~ of Word and Sacrament, ministers of Word and Service, and lay delegates of the conference. One-third of the ~~ordained~~ ministers, ~~rostered lay~~ of Word and Sacrament, ministers of Word and Service, and lay delegates of the conference shall constitute a quorum.
- S12.01.05. Persons elected by congregations to be voting members of the Synod Assembly, or their duly chosen alternates, shall attend the annual meeting of their conference. Each conference congregation is entitled to the same number of voting members at conference meetings as at the Synod Assembly and when official business of the conference is to be conducted.
- S12.01.06. It shall be the responsibility of the dean of the conference to:
- a. Advise and assist the bishop in matters pertaining to the ~~ordained~~ ~~ministers~~, ~~rostered~~ ~~lay~~ ministers, the congregations, and the conference.
  - b. Call and preside over the meetings of the conference and be responsible for setting the agenda for such meetings.
  - c. Encourage collegiality and study among the ~~ordained~~ ~~rostered~~ ministers, ~~rostered lay~~ ministers, and congregations of the conference.
  - d. Encourage collegiality and clustering among the ~~ordained~~ ministers of Word and Sacrament and congregations on an inter-conference level.
  - e. Perform other functions as this synod may assign.

## Chapter 13. CONGREGATIONS

- †S13.01. Each congregation, except those certified as congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America by the uniting churches, prior to being listed in the register of congregations of this synod, shall adopt the *Model Constitution for Congregations* or one acceptable to this synod that is not in contradiction to the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- a. **New congregations.** A congregation newly formed by this church and any congregation seeking recognition and reception by this church shall:
    - 1) Accept the criteria for recognition and reception as a congregation of this church, fulfill the functions of the congregation, and accept the governance provisions as provided in Chapter 9 of the ELCA constitution and bylaws.
    - 2) Adopt governing documents that include fully and without alterations the Preamble, Chapter 1, where applicable, and all required provisions of Chapters 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 15, 16, 17, 18, and 19 in the *Model Constitution for Congregations* consistent with requirements of the constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of this church. Bylaws and continuing resolutions, appropriate for inclusion in these chapters and not in conflict with these required provisions in the *Model Constitution for Congregations*, the constitution of this synod, or the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, may be adopted as described in Chapters 16 and 18 of the *Model Constitution for Congregations*.
    - 3) Accept the commitments expected of all congregations of the ELCA as stated in \*C6.01., \*C6.02., and \*C6.03., of the *Model Constitution for Congregations*.
  - b. **Congregations from another church body.** If a congregation is a member of another church body, the leaders of the congregation first should consult with the appropriate authorities of that church body before taking action to leave its current church body. After such consultation, leaders of the congregation should make contact with the ELCA synod bishop or staff where the congregation is located.
  - c. **Recognition and reception.** Recognition and reception into this church of transferring or independent congregations by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is based on the judgment

of the synod and action by the synod through the Synod Council and Synod Assembly. The synod bishop shall provide for prompt reporting of such additions to the secretary of this church for addition to the register of congregations.

- †S13.02. It shall be the responsibility of each congregation of this synod annually to choose from among its voting members laypersons to serve as members of the Synod Assembly as well as persons to represent it at meetings of any conference, cluster, coalition, or other area subdivision of which it is a member. The number of persons to be elected by each congregation and other qualifications shall be as prescribed in guidelines established by this synod.
- | S13.11. When a ~~pastor or a~~ rostered ~~lay~~ 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 ~~pastor or rostered-~~ lay minister shall make satisfactory settlement of the obligation before calling a successor.
- †S13.19. A congregation considering a relocation shall confer with the bishop of the synod in which it is territorially located and the appropriate unit of the churchwide organization before any steps are taken leading to such action. The approval of the Synod Council shall be received before any such action is effected.
- †S13.20. A congregation considering development of an additional site to be used regularly for worship shall confer with the bishop of the synod in which it is territorially located and the appropriate unit of the churchwide organization before any steps are taken leading to such action.
- S13.21. The alignment of congregations in pastoral charges, and all alterations in any alignment, shall be subject to approval by the Synod Assembly or by the Synod Council.
- †S13.22. Each congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America within the territory of this synod, except those which are in partnership with the Slovak Zion Synod, shall establish and maintain a relationship with this synod.
- †S13.23. Provision 9.71. of the ELCA constitution shall govern the relationship of this synod and a congregation of this synod regarding the property of the congregation. This synod may transfer or convey property to a congregation of the synod, subject to restrictions accepted by the congregation, including provision that if the Synod Council, in its sole and exclusive discretion, determines (1) that the property is not being used to

serve the mission and ministry needs of this church, or (2) that the congregation has transferred, encumbered, mortgaged, or in any way burdened or impaired any right, title, or interest in the property without the prior approval of the Synod Council, then title to the property shall revert to the synod, and the congregation, upon written demand, shall reconvey the property to the synod.

- S13.24.** If any congregation of this synod has disbanded, or if the members of a congregation agree that it is no longer possible for it to function as such, or if in the opinion of the Synod Council that the membership of a congregation has become so scattered or so diminished in numbers as to make it impractical for such a congregation to fulfill the purposes for which it was organized or that it is necessary for this synod to protect the congregation's property from waste and deterioration, the Synod Council, itself or through trustees appointed by it, may take charge and control of the property of the congregation to hold, manage, and convey the same on behalf of this synod. The congregation shall have the right to appeal the decision to the Synod Assembly.
- S13.25.** This synod may temporarily assume administration of a congregation upon its request or with its concurrence.
- S13.30. Discipline**
- †S13.31.** Congregations and members of congregations are subject to discipline in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 20 of the ELCA constitution and bylaws.
- S13.40. Synodically Authorized Worshiping Communities**
- S13.41.** Authorized worshiping communities, acknowledged under criteria, policies, and procedures approved by the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, shall accept and adhere to the Confession of Faith and Statement of Purpose of this church, shall be served by leadership under the criteria of this church, and shall be subject to the discipline of this church.

## Chapter 14. ROSTERED MINISTERS

### S14.10 Ministers of Word and Sacrament

- †S14.11. The time and place of the ordination of those persons properly called to congregations or non-congregational service of this synod shall be authorized by the bishop of this synod.
- †S14.12. Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,
- a. Every minister of Word and Sacrament shall:
    - 1) preach the Word;
    - 2) administer the sacraments;
    - 3) conduct public worship;
    - 4) provide pastoral care;
    - 5) seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel;
    - 6) impart knowledge of this church and its wider ministry through distribution of its communications and publications;
    - 7) witness to the Kingdom of God in the community, in the nation and abroad; and
    - 8) speak 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; and

- 5) endeavor to increase the support given by the congregation to the work of the ELCA churchwide organization and of this synod.

S14.~~02~~12.05. Following the acceptance of a letter of call from a congregation and the pastor's installation into the pastoral office of that congregation, the pastor shall become a member of that congregation. In a parish of multiple congregations, the pastor shall hold membership in one of the congregations.

S14.~~03~~13. The pastor shall (a) 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.~~04~~14. Whenever members of a congregation move to such a distance that regular attendance at its services becomes impractical, it shall be the duty of the pastor to commend them, upon their consent, to the pastoral care of a Lutheran congregation nearer to their place of residence.

S14.~~05~~15. Each ~~ordained~~ minister of Word and Sacrament on the roster of this synod shall submit a report of his or her ministry to the bishop of the synod at least 90 days prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.

†S14.16. When a congregation of this church desires to call a pastor or a candidate for the ministry of Word and Sacrament of this church:

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

S14.~~12~~17. No ~~ordained~~ minister of Word and Sacrament shall accept a call ~~in this synod~~ without first conferring with the bishop of this synod. ~~An ordained~~ 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 chair 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 death or, following consultation with the synodical 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 shall personally investigate such conditions together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson.
- c. In case of alleged physical disability or mental incapacity under paragraph a.4) above, the bishop's committee shall obtain and document competent medical opinion concerning the pastor's condition. When a disability or incapacity is evident to the committee, the bishop of this synod may declare the pastorate vacant. When the pastorate is declared vacant, the Synod Council shall list the pastor on the roster of ministers of Word and Sacrament as disabled. Upon removal of the disability and restoration of 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 the 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 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/her hands in good order by a departing pastor before:
- a. installation in another call, or
  - b. approval of a request for change in roster status.
- †S14.22.** The pastor shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to a former congregation before:
- a. installation in another call, or
  - b. approval of a request for change in roster status.
- †S14.23.** During service to a congregation, an interim pastor shall have the rights and duties in the congregation of a regularly called pastor. The interim pastor may delegate the same in part to an interim supply pastor with the consent of the bishop of this synod. The interim pastor and any rostered minister who may assist shall refrain from exerting influence in the selection of a pastor. Upon completion of service, the interim pastor shall certify to the bishop of this synod that the parochial records, for the period for which the interim pastor was responsible, are in order.
- †S14.24.** With the approval of the synodical bishop expressed in writing which sets forth a clear statement of the purpose to be served by such a departure from the normal rule of permanency of the call as expressed in **†S14.18.**, a congregation may call a pastor for a specific term. Details of such calls shall be in writing setting forth the purpose and conditions involved. Prior to the completion of a term, the bishop of this synod or a representative of

the bishop shall meet with the pastor and representatives of the congregation for a review of the call. Such call may also be terminated before its expiration in accordance with the provisions of †S14.18.

**S14.1525.** All ~~ordained~~ ministers of Word and Sacrament under a call shall attend meetings of the Synod Assembly, and the pastors of congregations shall also attend the meetings of the conference, cluster, coalition, or other area subdivision to which the congregation belongs.

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

†S14.31. The time and place of the consecration of those persons properly called to congregations or non-congregational service of this synod shall be authorized by the bishop of this synod.

†S14.32. Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, every 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 the ELCA and its wider ministry of the gospel, and advocate for the work of all expressions of this church; and
- i. Identify and encourage qualified persons to prepare for ministry of the gospel.

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

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

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

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

S14.42. No minister of Word and Service shall accept a call without first conferring with the bishop of this synod. A minister of Word and Service shall respond with an answer of acceptance or declination to a letter of call within 30 days of receipt of such call. In exceptional circumstances with the approval of the bishop of this synod and the chair of the Congregation Council of the congregation issuing the call, an additional 15 days may be granted to respond to a letter of call.

- †S14.43. a. The call of a congregation, when accepted by a minister of Word and Service, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment which shall be terminated only by death or, following consultation with the synodical bishop, for the following reasons:
- 1) mutual agreement to terminate the call or the completion of a call for a specific term;
  - 2) resignation of the minister of Word and Service, which shall become effective, unless otherwise agreed, no later than 30 days after the date on which it was submitted;
  - 3) inability to conduct the office effectively in that

congregation in view of local conditions;

- 4) physical disability or mental incapacity of the minister of Word and Service;
- 5) suspension of the minister of Word and Service through discipline for more than three months;
- 6) resignation or removal of the minister of Word and Service from the roster of ministers of Word and Service of this church;
- 7) termination of the relationship between this church and the congregation;
- 8) dissolution of the congregation or the termination of a parish arrangement; or
- 9) suspension of the congregation through discipline for more than six months.

b. When allegations of physical disability or mental incapacity of the minister of Word and Service under paragraph a.4) above, or ineffective conduct of the ministry of Word and Service under paragraph a.3) above, have come to the attention of the bishop of this synod,

- 1) the bishop in his or her sole discretion may investigate such conditions personally together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson, or
- 2) when such allegations have been brought to the synod's attention by an official recital of allegations by the Congregation Council or by a petition signed by at least one-third of the voting members of the congregation, the bishop personally shall investigate such conditions together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson.

c. In case of alleged physical disability or mental incapacity under paragraph a.4) above, the bishop's committee shall obtain and document competent medical opinion concerning the minister of Word and Service's condition. When a disability or incapacity is evident to the committee, the bishop of this synod may declare the position vacant and the minister of Word and Service shall be listed on the roster of ministers of Word and Service as disabled. Upon removal of the disability and restoration of the minister of Word and

Service to health, the bishop shall take steps to enable the minister of Word and Service to resume the ministry, either in the congregation last served or in another appropriate call.

- d. In the case of alleged local difficulties that imperil the effective functioning of the congregation under paragraph a.3) above, the bishop's committee shall endeavor to hear from all concerned persons, after which the bishop together with the committee shall present their recommendations first to the minister of Word and Service and then to the congregation. The recommendations of the bishop's committee address whether the minister of Word and Service's call should come to an end and, if so, may suggest appropriate severance arrangements. The committee may also propose other actions that should be undertaken by the congregation and by the minister of Word and Service, if appropriate. If the minister of Word and Service and congregation agree to carry out such recommendations, no further action need be taken by the synod.
- e. If either party fails to assent to the recommendations of the bishop's committee concerning the minister of Word and Service's call, the congregation may dismiss the minister of Word and Service only at a legally called meeting after consultation with the bishop, either (a) by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee did not recommend termination of the call, or (b) by a majority vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee recommended termination of the call.
- f. If, in the course of proceedings described in paragraph c. or paragraph d. above, the bishop's committee concludes that there may be grounds for disciplinary action, the committee shall make recommendations concerning disciplinary action in accordance with the provisions of this church's constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.

**†S14.44.** Ministers of Word and Service shall respect the integrity of the ministry of congregations which they do not serve and shall not exercise ministerial functions therein unless invited to do so by the Congregation Council.

**†S14.45.** The minister of Word and Service shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to a former congregation before:

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

**†S14.46.** With the approval of the synodical bishop expressed in writing, which sets forth a clear statement of the purpose to be served by such a departure from the normal rule of permanency of the call as expressed in †S14.43., a congregation may call a minister of Word and Service for a specific term. Details of such calls shall be in writing setting forth the purpose and conditions involved. Prior to the completion of a term, the bishop of this synod or a representative of the bishop shall meet with the minister of Word and Service and representatives of the congregation for a review of the call. Such call may also be terminated before its expiration in accordance with the provisions of **†S14.43.**

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

## Chapter 15. FINANCIAL MATTERS

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

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

- a. The mission of this church beyond the congregation is to be supported by such a proportionate share of each congregation's annual budget as each congregation determines. This synod shall develop guidelines for determining "proportionate share," and shall consult with congregational leaders to assist each congregation in making its determination.
- b. This synod shall receive the proportionate share of the mission support from its congregations, and shall transmit that percentage or amount of each congregation's mission support as determined in consultation with the churchwide organization and approved by the Synod Assembly as part of its budget consideration.
- c. Should the Synod Assembly not approve the proportionate share of mission support determined in consultation with the churchwide organization, a new consultation with the churchwide organization shall take place. The Synod Council is authorized to amend the budget adopted by the Synod Assembly to reflect the results of this consultation.

†S15.12. The annual budget of this synod shall reflect the entire range of its own activities and its commitment to partnership funding with other synods and the churchwide organization.

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

S15.13.01. The Synod Council shall have power to borrow money on such property as this synod may own or may hereafter acquire, and to authorize the execution of mortgages, bonds, warrants, or other instruments of indebtedness ~~therefore~~ therefor.

- S15.13.02. The Synod Council may authorize the sale, assignment, or transfer of any property belonging to this synod.
- S15.13.03. The Synod Council may acquire such property as it may deem necessary to the work of the synod or its ultimate welfare.
- S15.13.04. The Synod Council shall have the power to reapportion all synodical items within the budget in order to meet properly the needs of the various agencies and objectives of this synod.
- S15.13.05. The Synod Council shall periodically cause a study to be made of the investments of this synod to determine whether such investments are consistent with Christian commitment to justice and business practice.
- S15.14.** Except when such procedure would jeopardize current operations, a reserve amounting to no more than 16% of the sum of the amounts scheduled in the next year's budget for regular distribution to synodical causes shall be carried forward annually for disbursement in the following year in the interest of making possible a more even flow of income to such causes. The exact number of dollars to be held in reserve shall be determined by the Synod Council.
- S15.21.** No appeal to congregations of this or any other synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for the raising of funds shall be conducted by congregations or organizations related to or affiliated with this synod without the consent of the Synod Assembly or the Synod Council.
- S15.21.~~A11~~A17. This synod authorizes the establishment of Gifts of Hope to increase understanding and strengthen relationships between the beneficiary organizations and the congregations of the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod and to raise funds for the beneficiary organizations. The Synod Council shall appoint an *ex-officio* member to the Gifts of Hope coordinating committee. The ~~council~~Synod Council shall approve any changes to this statement of purpose.
- †**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 selected by the Synod Council. The audited annual financial report shall be submitted by this synod to the churchwide Office of the Treasurer and to the congregations of this synod. The financial reports shall be in the format approved from time to time by the churchwide Office of the Treasurer.
- †**S15.32.** This synod shall maintain adequate, continuous insurance coverage in accordance with standards recommended by the churchwide organization. Insurance programs offered or endorsed by the churchwide organization shall be deemed to fulfill this obligation.

## Chapter 16. INDEMNIFICATION

**†S16.01.** Subject to the limitations and duties imposed by law, each person who is or was made or threatened to be made a party to any proceeding by reason of the present or former capacity of that person as a Synod Council member, officer, employee, or committee member of this synod shall be indemnified against all costs and expenses incurred by that person in connection with the proceeding. Indemnification of any person by reason of that person's capacity as a director, officer, employee, or committee member or 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 (or whose duties in that position involve or involved service in the capacity of) a director, officer, partner, trustee, employee, or agent of another organization, is or was made or threatened to be made a party to a proceeding by reason of such capacity, then such person shall be entitled to indemnification only if (a) the Synod Council has established a process for determining whether a person serving in the capacity described in this section shall be entitled to indemnification in any specific case, and (b) that process has been applied in making a specific determination that such person is entitled to indemnification.

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

**†S16.04.** When written charges against a rostered minister of this church are made

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

## Chapter 17. ADJUDICATION

- †S17.01. The synodical bishop and the Executive Committee of the Synod Council shall be available to give counsel when disputes arise within this synod.
- †S17.02. The synodical bishop and the Executive Committee of the Synod Council shall receive expressions of concern from rostered ministers of this church, congregations, and organizations within this synod; provide a forum in which the parties concerned can seek to work out matters causing distress or conflict; and make appropriate recommendations for their resolution. When the matter at issue cannot be resolved in this matter, the prescribed procedures for investigation, decision, appeal, and adjudication shall be followed. Allegations or charges that could lead to the discipline of a rostered minister of this church shall not be addressed by the Executive Committee but shall be resolved through the disciplinary process set forth in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*.
- †S17.03. When there is disagreement among units of this synod on a substantive issue that cannot be resolved by the parties, the aggrieved party or parties may appeal to the synodical bishop and the Executive Committee of the Synod Council for a consultation. If this consultation fails to resolve the issue, a petition may be addressed by the parties to the Synod Council requesting it to arbitrate the issue. The decision of the Synod Council shall be final.
- †S17.04. When a component or beneficiary of a synod has a disagreement on a substantive issue that it cannot resolve, it may address an appeal to the synodical bishop and the Executive Committee of the Synod Council. In this case the decision of the Executive Committee shall prevail, except that upon the motion of a member of the Synod Council, the decision shall be referred to the Synod Council for final action.
- †S17.10. **Adjudication in a Congregation**
- †S17.11. When there is disagreement among factions within a congregation on a substantive issue that cannot be resolved by the parties, members of a congregation shall have access to the synodical bishop for consultation after informing the chair of the Congregation Council of their intent. If the consultation fails to resolve the issue(s), the Consultation Committee of this synod shall consider the matter. If the Consultation Committee of this synod shall fail to resolve the issue(s), the matter shall be referred to the Synod Council, whose decision shall be final.

## Chapter 18. AMENDMENTS, BYLAWS, AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS

### †S18.10. Amendments to Constitution

†S18.11. Certain sections of this constitution incorporate and record therein required provisions of the constitution and bylaws of this church. If such provisions are amended by the Churchwide Assembly, corresponding amendments shall be introduced at once into this constitution by the secretary of this synod upon receipt of formal certification thereof from the secretary of Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

†S18.12. Whenever the secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America officially informs this synod that the Churchwide Assembly has amended the *Constitution for Synods*, this constitution may be amended to reflect any such amendment by a majority vote at any subsequent meeting of the Synod Assembly without presentation at a prior Synod Assembly. An amendment that is identical to a provision of the *Constitution for Synods* shall be deemed to have been ratified upon its adoption by this synod. The Church Council, through the secretary of this church, shall be given prompt notification of its adoption.

†S18.13. Other amendments to this constitution may be adopted by this synod through either of the following procedures:

- a. An amendment may be adopted by a two-thirds vote at a regular meeting of the Synod Assembly after having been presented in writing at the previous regular meeting of the Synod Assembly over the signatures of at least five members and been approved by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting at such a regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.
- b. The Synod Council may propose an amendment, with notice to be sent to the congregations of this synod at least six months prior to the next regular meeting of the Synod Assembly. Such an amendment shall require for adoption a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting at such a regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.

All such amendments shall become effective upon ratification by the Churchwide Assembly or by the Church Council.

### †S18.20. Amendments to Bylaws

†S18.21. This synod may adopt bylaws not in conflict with this constitution or with the constitution and bylaws of the churchwide organization. This synod may amend its bylaws at any meeting of the Synod Assembly by a two-thirds vote of voting members of the assembly present and voting. Newly

adopted bylaws and amendments to existing bylaws shall be reported to the secretary of this church.

**†S18.30. Amendments to Continuing Resolutions**

**†S18.31.** This synod may adopt continuing resolutions not in conflict with this constitution or its bylaws or the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of the churchwide organization. Such continuing resolutions may be adopted or amended by a majority vote of the Synod Assembly or by a two-thirds vote of Synod Council. Newly adopted continuing resolutions and amendments to existing continuing resolutions shall be reported to the secretary of this church.