

**CONSTITUTION, BYLAWS, AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS OF  
THE SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN SYNOD OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN  
CHURCH IN AMERICA**

**Chapter 1  
NAME AND INCORPORATION**

- \*\*†S1.01. The name of this synod, as determined by the Churchwide Assembly, shall be the Southeast Michigan Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- †S1.02. For the purposes of this constitution and the accompanying bylaws, the Southeast Michigan 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 triangular block. The name of the synod and the year of its constituting convention form the outer edge of the seal.
- S1.31.01. This synod shall maintain offices in the State of Michigan and in such other locations as the Synod Assembly may from time to time determine.

**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*

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\*\* The provisions of the Constitution and the Bylaws which pertain to the same matter have been placed together.

Major sections are designated as chapters. The chapters are numbered 1 through 18.

Constitutional provisions are codified with two sets of numbers. The chapter number and a two-digit number preceding the second period in the codification. Thus one constitutional provision relating to the Synod Assembly is codified 7.11.

Bylaw provisions are codified with three sets of numbers, the chapter number, the related constitutional provision number, and a two-digit number. Thus one bylaw provision related to the Synod Assembly and its meetings is codified 7.11.01.

Continuing resolutions are also codified with the three sets of numbers except that the third set is preceded by a capital letter. Thus a continuing resolution might be numbered 16. to designate the chapter; 16.20. to designate the subject matter within the chapter; and the third set might be numbered A87 in the codification 16.21.A87 to indicate by the "A" that it is the first continuing resolution regarding that subject and by the "87" that it was adopted in 1987.

*Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* (ELCA or “this church”), which are recognized as having governing force in the life of this synod.

- †S2.02. The name Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA or “this church”) as used herein refers in general references to this whole church, including its three expressions—congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization. The name Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is also the name of the corporation of the churchwide organization to which specific references may be made herein.
- †S2.03. No provision of this constitution shall be inconsistent with the constitution and bylaws of this church.

### **Chapter 3 TERRITORY**

- †S3.01. The territory of this synod, as determined by the Churchwide Assembly, shall be the counties of Genesee, Lapeer, Lenawee, Livingston, Macomb, Monroe, Oakland, Saint Clair, Shiawassee, Washtenaw, Wayne in the state of MICHIGAN and Trinity Lutheran Church of Brown City, Sanilac County.
- S3.01.01 The territory of this synod is located on the original ancestral homelands of the Odawa, Bodewadmi (Potawatomi) Peoria, Mississauga, Anishinabewaki, Wyandot, Sauk, Myaamia, and Attiwonderonk peoples. We give thanks for their presence here since time immemorial. We also wish to recognize and honor all our Indigenous siblings who have and continue to call this land their home.
- †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 Bylaw 10.01.01 and 10.01.03.

### **Chapter 4 CONFESSION OF FAITH**

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

c. The canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the written Word of God. Inspired by God's Spirit speaking through their authors, they record and announce God's revelation centering in Jesus Christ. Through them God's Spirit speaks to us to create and sustain Christian faith and fellowship for service in the world.

†S4.03. This synod accepts the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God and the authoritative source and norm of its proclamation, faith, and life.

†S4.04. This synod accepts the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds as true declarations of the faith of this synod.

†S4.05. This synod accepts the Unaltered Augsburg Confession as a true witness to the Gospel, acknowledging as one with it in faith and doctrine all churches that likewise accept the teachings of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession.

†S4.06. This synod accepts the other confessional writings in the Book of Concord; namely, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles and the Treatise, the Small Catechism, the Large Catechism, and the Formula of Concord, as further valid interpretations of the faith of the church.

†S4.07. This synod confesses the Gospel, recorded in the Holy Scriptures and confessed in the ecumenical creeds and Lutheran confessional writings, as the power of God to create and sustain the Church for God's mission in the world.

## **Chapter 5 NATURE OF THE CHURCH**

†S5.01. All power in the Church belongs to our Lord Jesus Christ, its head. All actions of this synod are to be carried out under His rule and authority.

†S5.02. This church confesses the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church and is resolved to serve Christian Unity throughout the world.

†S5.03. The Church exists both as an inclusive fellowship and as local congregations gathered for worship and Christian service. Congregations find their fulfillment in the universal community of the Church, and the universal Church exists in and through congregations. This Church, therefore, derives its character and powers both from the sanction and representation of its congregations and from its inherent nature as an expression of the broader fellowship of the faithful. In length, it acknowledges itself to be in the historic continuity of the communion of saints; in breadth, it expresses the fellowship of believers and congregations in our day.

†S5.04. This church, inspired and led by the Holy Spirit, participates in The Lutheran World Federation as a global communion of churches, engaging in faithful witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ and in service for the sake of God’s mission in the world.

**\*Chapter 6**  
**STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

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

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

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

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

- a. Provide for pastoral care of congregations and rostered ministers in the synod;
- b. Plan for, facilitate, and nurture the mission of this church through congregations;
- c. Strengthen interdependent relationships among congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization, and foster relationships with agencies and institutions affiliated with or related to this church as well as ecumenical partners.
- d. Interpret the work of this church to congregations and to the public on the territory of the synod.

†S6.03.01. The responsibilities of the synod include the following:

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

5) supporting recruitment of leaders for this church's colleges, universities, seminaries, and social ministry organizations.

c. providing for discipline of congregations, ministers of Word and Sacrament and ministers of Word and Service, as well as for termination of call, appointment, adjudication, and appeals consistent with Chapter 20 of this church's constitution.

d. providing for archives in conjunction with other synods.

†S6.03.02. In planning for, facilitating, and nurturing the mission of this church through congregations, the responsibilities of the synod include the following:

a. developing of new ministries, redevelopment of existing ministries, and support and assistance in the conclusion, if necessary, of a particular ministry;

b. leading and encouraging of congregations in their evangelism efforts;

c. assisting members of its congregations in carrying out their ministries in the world;

d. encouraging congregations to respond to human need, work for justice and peace, care for the sick and the suffering, and participate responsibly in society;

e. providing resources for congregational life;

f. grouping congregations in conferences, clusters, coalitions, or other area subdivisions for mission purposes.

†S6.03.03. In strengthening interdependent relationships among congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization, and in fostering relationships with agencies and institutions affiliated with or related to this church as well as with ecumenical partners, the responsibilities of the synod include the following:

a. promoting interdependent relationships among congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization, and entering into relationships with other synods in the region;

b. fostering organizations for youth, women, and men, and organizations for language or ethnic communities;

c. developing relationships with social ministry organizations and ministries, participating in their mission planning, and providing supportive funding;

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

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

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

S6.03.05. The synod shall encourage mutually supportive relationships among congregations.

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

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

## **Chapter 7**

### **SYNOD ASSEMBLY**

- †S7.01. This synod shall have a Synod Assembly, which shall be its highest legislative authority. The powers of the Synod Assembly are limited only by the provisions of the Articles of Incorporation, this constitution and bylaws, the assembly's own resolutions, and the constitutions and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- †S7.11. A regular meeting of the Synod Assembly shall be held at least triennially.
- S7.11.01. The regular meeting of the Synod Assembly shall be held at such date and time as the Synod Council shall determine. Officers, members of the Synod Council, voting members of the Churchwide Assembly and members of the Consultation Committee and the Committee on Discipline who are to be chosen by the Synod Assembly shall be elected at the appropriate regular meeting and such other business transacted as may come before the meeting.

- S7.11.02. The Synod Assembly shall elect one voting member of the Churchwide Assembly for every 6,000 baptized members in this synod. Each voting member so elected shall be a voting member of a congregation of this synod. In addition, the Synod Assembly shall elect one voting member for every fifty (50) congregations in this synod. The synod bishop, who is ex officio a member of the Churchwide Assembly, shall be included in the number of voting members so determined. The Vice-President of the synod shall automatically be a voting member of the Churchwide Assembly and shall be included in the number of voting members so determined. These voting members elected by each synod shall comply with the principles of organization, commitment to inclusiveness, and interdependence as specified in Chapter 5 of this constitution. In addition, each synod shall elect one additional voting member who is a youth or young adult at the time of the election and one additional voting member who is a person of color or a person whose primary language is other than English.
- S7.11.03. When it is determined by the Synod Council and the bishop that it is not practical or prudent for the Synod Assembly to meet in-person, the Synod Council and bishop may provide for either a regular or special meeting of the Synod Assembly to be conducted by telephone, internet, or other electronic means. When holding a meeting of the Synod Assembly by telephone, internet or other electronic means, all voting members must be available to participate in the items presented, discussed, and voted upon.
- 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 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. All meetings of the Synod Assembly shall be held at the office of the synod in the State of Michigan or at such other place as shall be determined by the Synod Council and stated in the notice of meeting.
- S7.13.02. Except as otherwise provided by statute, notice of the time, place and purposes of a meeting of the Synod Assembly shall be given by the secretary of this synod not fewer than ten (10) days nor more than sixty (60) days before the date of the meeting

to the members of the Synod Assembly. Such notice shall be posted on the synod's website and emailed to every congregation and rostered minister. It shall be the responsibility of each congregation and rostered minister to notify the synod secretary of any changes in email address or, in the event a congregation or rostered leader has no email address, to notify the synod secretary of a post office address for receipt of this notice. The time and place for the next regular Synod Assembly shall normally be announced at the conclusion of each Synod Assembly.

- S7.13.03. At least twenty (20) days prior to a regular Synod Assembly the secretary shall prepare and make available to each voting member-elect a pre-assembly report, by posting the report on the synod website. The report shall include the agenda, reports and resolutions referred by the secretary, Synod Council or voting members-elect; reports of recommendations regarding these resolutions by appropriate synod committees together with the original motion or resolution by quotation or by reference to published reports; and the proposed agenda and program for the Synod Assembly. Any voting member may, when registering for assembly, request that they receive a printed copy of the pre-assembly report by ordinary mail.
- S7.14. One-half (50%) of the voting members of the Synod Assembly shall constitute a quorum.
- S7.14.01. If a quorum is not present at a meeting of the Synod Assembly, those voting members present may adjourn the meeting to another time and place, provided that only those persons eligible to vote at the original meeting may vote at the rescheduled meeting.
- S7.14.02. The bishop shall call meetings of the Synod Assembly to order, and shall act as chair of such meetings. The secretary of the synod shall act as secretary of all meetings of the Synod Assembly; but in the absence of the secretary, the chair may appoint any person to act as secretary of the meeting.
- S7.14.03. The arrangements for the agenda, programming, and worship at the Synod Assembly shall be under the supervision of the bishop and the Synod Council.
- †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 rostered ministers under call on the roster of this synod shall be voting members of the Synod Assembly.
  - b. A minimum of one lay member elected by each congregation with fewer than 175 baptized members and a minimum of two lay members elected by each congregation with 175 or more baptized members related to this synod, typically one of whom shall be a man and one of whom shall be a woman, shall be voting members. The Synod Council shall establish a formula to provide additional lay representation from congregations on the basis of the

number of baptized members in the congregation. The Synod Council shall seek to ensure that, as nearly as possible, at least 45 percent of the lay members of the assembly shall be women and, as nearly as possible, at least 45 percent shall be men.

c. 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 the opening of the next regular Synod Assembly.

S7.21.01.A15. Each congregation of the Synod shall be entitled to a maximum of two lay voting members unless additional voting members are otherwise authorized by these Governing Documents. Each congregation in the Southeast Michigan Synod will be entitled to one additional voting member if the baptized membership of the congregation exceeds 1000, based on the preceding year's congregational report. The Synod, in order to achieve male/female balance in the total voting membership, may notify the congregation whether the additional voting member is to be male or female.

†S7.21.02. If a special Synod Assembly is called and voting members at the previous assembly are unable to serve as voting members, where permitted by state law, the congregation through the Congregation Council may elect new members who shall continue to serve until the next regular Synod Assembly.

S7.21.02A. The lay officers of the synod shall not be counted as additional lay representatives in order to have at least 60% of the voting membership of the assembly composed of laypersons.

S7.21.03. Each congregation within the Southeast Michigan Synod shall be entitled to elect one additional lay voting member who has reached a minimum age of 14 but not yet reached the age of 18 at the time of election or appointment for service.

S7.21.04. A Licensed Lay Minister who is serving as the pastoral presence in a congregation of this synod shall have voice and vote at the Synod Assembly.

S7.21.05. Each Congregation in the Southeast Michigan Synod will be entitled to one additional lay voting Member who is a person of color or whose primary language is other than English. This additional voting Member's expenses will be paid for by the Synod if requested in writing to the Synod office.

S7.21.07. Expenses of voting members shall be paid by their congregations.

S7.21.A24. In order to ensure that at least 60% of the voting membership is composed of laypersons, each congregation shall be entitled to elect/select a minimum of two Lay Voting Members

- S7.21.B24. Authorized worshipping communities of the synod, which have been authorized under ELCA Bylaw 10.02.03., may elect two lay baptized members related to this synod, normally one of whom shall be a man and one of whom shall be a woman, as Voting Members of the Synod Assembly.
- S7.21.C24. A minister of Word and Sacrament from a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by the Churchwide Assembly the privilege of both voice and vote in the Synod Assembly during the period of that minister's service in a congregation of this church.
- S7.22. This synod may establish processes that permit retired rostered ministers, or those granted disability status, or on leave from call, on the roster of the synod to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, provided that such processes not result in fewer than 60% of the voting members of the Synod Assembly being laypersons in contravention of †S7.21. If the synod does not establish processes to permit the rostered ministers specified above to serve as voting members, they shall have voice but not vote in the meetings of the Synod Assembly.
- S7.22.01. Rostered Ministers who have retired, disability or on leave from call status and who are members of a congregation of this Synod shall be voting members.
- S7 22.01.B15. Retired Ministers of Word and Sacrament and Retired Ministers of Word and Service on the roster of the Synod, shall be voting members, consistent with S7.21.b. above, provided they are a voting member of a congregation of this synod. The synod, in order to achieve male/female balance in the total voting membership may designate additional "at large" lay voting member positions to compensate for any imbalance in the male/female mix in the voting membership of rostered ministers. Such additional "at large" positions shall be designated as male or female as required and shall be allocated by the Executive Committee among congregations of the synod.
- †S7.23. The presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and such other official representatives of the churchwide organization as may be designated by the presiding bishop, shall have voice but not vote in the meetings of the Synod Assembly. Like privileges shall be accorded to those additional persons whom the Synod Assembly or the Synod Council shall from time to time designate.
- S7.23A All retired Ministers of Word and Sacrament and Retired Ministers of Word and Service, all Ministers of Word and Sacrament and all Ministers of Word and Service on leave from call, all of whose names appear on the rosters of this synod, shall have the privilege of voice but not vote at all meetings of the Synod Assembly. 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. Rostered 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 this synod. Lay members of the Synod Assembly representing congregations shall continue as such until the opening of the next regular synod assembly, or unless replaced by the election of new members for a special synod assembly, or until they have been disqualified by termination of congregation membership.
- †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 lay representatives of authorized worshipping communities of the synod, which have been authorized under ELCA Bylaw 10.01.04., to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, consistent with \*S7.21.
- S7.26.A19. Congregations under development and authorized worshipping communities of the synod, which have been authorized under ELCA Bylaw 10.02.03., may elect two lay baptized members related to this synod, normally one of whom shall be male and one of whom shall be female, as voting members of the Synod Assembly. In addition, in the event that such worshipping community has a Licensed Lay Minister as its pastoral presence, such Licensed Lay Minister shall also be a voting member 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 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.
- S7.28. 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 business of the Synod Assembly.
- S7.32. *Robert's Rules of Order*, latest edition, shall govern parliamentary procedure of the Synod Assembly, unless otherwise ordered by the assembly.

S7.33. "Ex-officio" as used herein means membership with full rights of voice and vote unless otherwise expressly limited.

S7.33.01. Committees for each Synod Assembly shall be appointed by the Synod Council in accordance with the criteria established by S6.04. of the synod constitution, as follows:

- a. Credentials Committee. This committee shall determine the eligibility of the members of the Synod Assembly.
- b. Resolutions Committee. All resolutions and proposed modifications in the Constitution/Bylaws of this synod shall be considered by the Resolutions Committee. Such items may be submitted by: voting members of the Synod Assembly; congregations, conferences, or committees of this synod; the Synod Council.

In order for such items to be included in the pre-assembly report, they must be received by the Resolutions Committee at least sixty (60) days in advance of the Synod Assembly. Later submissions must be accompanied by 250 copies, in the proper format, of the item to be considered and may be considered only by a majority vote of the Synod Assembly. The requirement to provide 250 copies may be waived by the committee, if they have been able to finish their work on a late resolution and get it posted to the website with pre-assembly reports at least 20 days prior to the Synod Assembly.

The committee shall assist submitters in achieving the fullest clarity and accuracy in their proposals (including rationales), actively facilitate consultation between submitters who offer similar proposals, and recommend the placement of each item on the agenda of the Synod Assembly. The Committee shall make recommendations for actions regarding proposals.

Resolutions shall consist of: no more than three hundred (300) words, no more than three (3) "Resolved" paragraphs, and no preamble. A "Rationale" of less than five hundred (500) words may be appended to the resolutions and will not be subject to debate.

- c. Elections Committee. This committee shall prepare, distribute, collect and count ballots of all elections and shall announce the results to the Synod Assembly. The members shall be appointed from congregations local to the Synod Assembly meeting place and be supervised by a voting member or members of the Synod Assembly.
- d. Nominating Committee. This committee shall function in accord with

## **Chapter 8 OFFICERS**

- †S8.01. The officers of this synod shall be a bishop, vice-president, a secretary, and a treasurer.
- S8.01.01. The Synod Council may, from time to time appoint an assistant secretary and /or an assistant treasurer. The term of office shall not exceed four years and there shall be no term limits. The assistant secretary and assistant treasurer shall be voting members of a congregation of this synod. The assistant secretary and assistant treasurer may be either a layperson or an ordained minister.
- S8.01.02. There shall be at least one person of color, or whose primary language is other than English, serving in the office of vice-president, secretary, treasurer, assistant secretary or assistant treasurer. In the event of noncompliance with this provision at the election of these offices, those elections will be declared invalid. The election process will continue until this provision is fulfilled.
- S8.10. **Bishop**
- †S8.11. The bishop shall be elected by the Synod Assembly. The bishop shall be a minister of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- S8.11.01. When authorized by the Synod Council in order to address special circumstances, the synod bishop may be compensated as an employee or contractor for specified services to another expression of this church. Such an arrangement may be terminated by the Synod Assembly or Synod Council if determined to be detrimental to the function of the office or if the special circumstances no longer apply.
- S8.11.02. A Mutual Ministry Committee shall be elected by the Synod Council after consultation with the bishop. This committee shall seek to give encouragement by its concern for the spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being of the full-time salaried professional synod staff. 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.
- †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 Word and Service.

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

- of rostered ministers, and congregations of this synod;
- 3) Be the chief ecumenical officer of this synod;
  - 4) Be a member of the Conference of Bishops and consult regularly with other synod bishops;
  - 5) Foster awareness of other churches throughout the Lutheran world communion and, where appropriate, engage in contact with leaders of those churches;
  - 6) Cultivate communion in faith and mission with appropriate Christian judicatory leaders functioning within the territory of this synod; and
  - 7) Be ex officio a member of the Churchwide Assembly.
- i. Oversee and administer the work of this synod and in so doing:
- 1) Serve as the president of this 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;
  - 2) 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) direct and guide the work of the other officers;
  - 5) exercise supervision over the work of all synod staff members;
  - 6) Appoint all committees for which provision is not otherwise made;
  - 7) Be a member of all committees and any other organizational units of the synod, except as otherwise provided in this constitution;
  - 8) Provide for preparation and maintenance of synod rosters containing the names and addresses of all rostered ministers of this synod and a record of the calls under which they are serving or the date on which their retired or disability status took effect;

- 9) Annually bring to the attention of the Synod Council the names of all rostered ministers on leave from call or engaged in approved graduate study in conformity with the constitution, bylaws and continuing resolutions of this church and pursuant to prior action of this synod through the Synod Council;
- 10) Provide for prompt reporting to the secretary of this church of:
  - a) additions to and subtractions from the rosters of this synod;
  - b) the issuance of certificates of transfer for rostered ministers in good standing who have received and accepted a properly issued, duly attested, regular letter of call under the jurisdiction of another synod; and
  - c) the entrance of the names of such persons for whom proper certificates of transfer has been received.
- 11) Provide for preparation and maintenance of a roster of the congregations of this synod and the names of the lay persons who have been elected to represent them; and
- 12) Appoint a statistician of the synod, who shall secure the reports of the congregations, collate the same for annual report to this synod, and make the reports available to the secretary of this church.

S8.12.A25 The Role of Licensed Lay Ministers and Synod Authorized Ministers: The bishop of this synod may establish a program to train and certify people to serve as Licensed Lay Ministers (LLMs) and Synod Authorized Ministers (SAMs), whose purpose is to enrich, amplify, and support the work of congregations. This program will fall under the synod bishop's oversight; the bishop will appoint a director who will have overall responsibility for the program, and an advisory board to assist the bishop and the director in administering the program.

- a. The Licensed Lay Minister is to be involved in the mission and outreach of the congregation as it seeks to draw others into its fellowship, minister to the needs of the community, and strengthen the faithful lives of the baptized. Licensed Lay Ministers may function as: preacher, teacher, catechist, evangelist, social service coordinator, youth worker, or parish administrator, or other roles developed in consultation with the bishop.
- b. In addition, when it is not possible for a congregation or the Synod to provide ordained pastoral leadership *for an extended period of time*, a Licensed Lay Minister may be assigned the role of a Synod Authorized Minister. This assignment shall be reviewed annually and approved by the

Bishop, Director, and Advisory Board. Both LLMs and SAMs must be authorized by the Bishop to preach; the Bishop must give special permission for LLMs or SAMs to preside at Holy Communion and Holy Baptism.

S8.12.B25 Requirements for Licensed Lay Ministers: A Licensed Lay Minister in the Southeast Michigan Synod shall:

- a. Be baptized, confirmed and an active member of an ELCA congregation of the Southeast Michigan Synod for a period of not less than two years.
- b. Be of sound moral character and mature faith and also show an interest in further spiritual formation.
- c. Possess the ability and willingness to participate in and complete a program of preparation leading to recognition as a Licensed Lay Minister (LLM Academy).
- d. Submit a Licensed Lay Ministry application along with the appropriate recommendations and support forms from the pastor and congregation council.
- e. Complete an interview with the Licensed Lay Ministry Advisory Board, a psychological evaluation, and a background check (for more information, contact the Synod Office).
- f. Serve in a supervised internship in their congregation or another congregation for a period of not less than six months, minimally 5-7 hours a week.
- g. Secure a Letter of Appointment for the Office of the Bishop to serve in their own congregation or another congregation, describing the Licensed Lay Minister's role and area of service.
- h. Licensed Lay Ministers may serve within the Synod as pulpit supply. Approval for this service requires at least two years of preaching plus a letter a recommendation submitted to the Advisory Board from a mentor and/or Conference Dean and/or pastor who can attest to the candidate's faith growth and biblical understanding.
- i. Maintain a regular relationship with an approved mentor who is rostered by the ELCA (clergy or deacon) who provides annual reports of the mentor/mentee relationship in advance of annual interviews for licensing. Non-ELCA mentors must be approved by the Advisory Board and/or the Synod's Bishop.
- j. Participate in ongoing education events, such as workshops and retreats.

Licensing of LLMs or SAMs is for one year and is renewable subject to the approval of the congregation or organization where the person is serving, the Licensed Lay Ministry Advisory Board, and the Synod's Bishop, who will sign the annual approval for licensing.

- S8.12.C25 Requirements for Synod Authorized Ministers: Upon successful completion of the training for LLMs and after at least two years of service, LLMs may be nominated to service as a Synod Authorized Minister (SAM). Those serving in this capacity will be in a supervisory relationship with the Bishop, their Conference Dean and the Advisory Board. SAMs are required to follow the guidelines and requirements set forth for all Licensed Lay Ministers of the Southeast Michigan Synod.
- a. SAMs must be nominated by the Advisory Board and approved by the Bishop to serve as a pastoral presence in a congregation.
  - b. SAMs may be required to complete further preparation as determined in consultation by the Bishop, Director and Advisory Board. This preparation may include a second approved internship and additional coursework on Sacramental Practices, Liturgy Planning and Preaching.

- S8.12.D25 Requirements for the Preparation of LLMs and SAMs: The Synod's program of preparation includes twelve units of study over the course of two years.

Those who are in preparation to become Licensed Lay Ministers are expected to complete an internship of at least six months (SAMs preferably nine months). Ordinarily this internship will begin at the conclusion of the program classwork.

The purpose of the internship is to enable the applicant to experience the kind of service that would be expected as a Licensed Lay Minister, to test that person's skills, interests, commitment, and acceptance of this role as a Licensed Lay Minister, and to continue preparation for the office of Licensed Lay Minister under the supervision of an experienced pastor who has been approved by the bishop.

The bishop may authorize Licensed Lay Ministers to serve within the Synod upon satisfactory completion of the program, a Letter of Appointment from a specific congregation or ministry, and a favorable recommendation from the Advisory Board. A roster of Licensed Lay Ministers will be kept by the Synod and made available to congregations within the Synod that may be looking for leadership assistance.

Licensed Lay Ministers shall be expected to abide by the ELCA's Definition and Guidelines for Discipline, renew Boundaries Training every three years, and undergo background checks as required by the synod bishop or the director of the LLM/SAM Program.

- S8.12.E25 Compensation for LLMs and SAMs: Ordinarily, LLMs and SAMs will be compensated by the congregation where they are serving. LLMs shall receive the Synod's posted pulpit supply rate for preaching. It is expected that SAMs will receive a contract from the congregation where they serve. This contract shall be developed in consultation with the Bishop's Office and will define additional duties, responsibilities and additional compensation.
- †S8.13. The synod bishop may appoint an attorney, admitted to the bar within the territory of the synod or the state where the synod is located, to be Synod Attorney. The appointment must be approved by the Synod Council and reported to the Synod Assembly and to the secretary of this church. The appointment continues until resignation or until a successor is appointed. The Synod Attorney provides legal advice and counsel to the synod officers and the Synod Council. The Synod Attorney is expected to be familiar with the governing documents and policies of the synod and, as necessary, to attend meetings of the Synod Council. The Synod Attorney serves without salary but may be retained and compensated for specific legal services requested by the synod.
- S8.14. The synod bishop may have such assistants as this synod shall from time to time authorize.
- †S8.15. The presiding bishop of this church, or the appointee of the presiding bishop, shall install into office, in accord with the policy and the approved rite of this church, each newly elected synod bishop.
- †S8.16. **Conflicts of Interest**
- †S8.16.01. The following procedures shall govern matters of potential conflicts of interest for synod bishops:
- a. Whenever a synod bishop determines that a matter of the kind described in †S8.16.01.b. may require the bishop's determination or action with respect to a related individual as defined in †S8.16.01.c., the synod bishop shall withdraw from personal involvement in such matter and shall so notify the presiding bishop. The presiding bishop shall then appoint another synod bishop from the same region to handle the matter to conclusion. In dealing with such matter, the appointed bishop shall exercise all of the functions and authority to the same extent as if the appointed bishop were the elected bishop of the withdrawing bishop's synod.
  - b. Matters include any proceedings under Chapter 20, proceedings under provisions 7.46. and 7.75. of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* (†S14.18. and (†S14.43.), candidacy, reinstatement, and similar matters where determinations or actions by the synod bishop could change, limit, restrict, approve, authorize, or deny the related individual's ministry on one of the official rosters of this church.

- c. A related individual is one who, with respect to the synod bishop, is a spouse, parent, son, daughter, sibling, uncle, aunt, niece, nephew, grandparent, grandchild, including corresponding members of blended families and in-laws (parent, son, daughter, or sibling of a spouse, spouse of a sibling, or the parent or sibling of the spouse of a sibling).

**S8.20. Vice President**

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

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

**S8.30. Secretary**

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

†S8.32. The secretary shall:

- a. Keep the minutes of all meetings of the synod Assembly and the Synod Council, be responsible for 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 alternate voting members elected by the Synod Assembly.

S8.32.01. The secretary may accomplish such distribution by posting the minutes and all post-assembly reports on the synod's website.

**S8.40. Treasurer**

†S8.41. The treasurer may be elected by the Synod Assembly or may be appointed by the

Synod Council. The treasurer shall be a voting member of a congregation of this synod. The treasurer may be either a layperson or a rostered minister.

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

- a. Management of the monies and accounts of this synod, its deeds, mortgages, contracts, evidences of claims and revenues, and trust funds, holding the same at all times subject to the order of the 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 order 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 as well as any funds to support restricted programs 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.

S8.50. **General Provisions**

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

- c. The bishop of this synod shall be elected to a term of six years and may be reelected.
- d. The vice president and secretary of this synod shall be elected to a term of four years and may be reelected. The officer shall serve until a successor takes office.
- e. The Treasurer of this synod shall be appointed by the Synod Council to a four-year term and may be reappointed. The treasurer shall serve until a successor takes office.

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

- S8.52.02. The term of office of the bishop shall begin 90 days following election unless otherwise provided by the Synod Council.
- †S8.53. Each officer shall be a voting member of 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 ten 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.
- f. Proceedings for the recall or dismissal of a synod bishop shall be instituted by written petition by:

g. the Synod Council on an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of its elected members present and voting;

3) the Synod Assembly on an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of its members present and voting;

4) at least 10 synod bishops; or

h. the presiding bishop of this church.

b. Proceedings for the recall or dismissal of an officer of a synod, other than the synod bishop, shall be instituted by written petition by:

1) the Synod Council on an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of its elected members present and voting;

2) the Synod Assembly on an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of its members present and voting; or

i. the synod bishop.

c. The petition shall be filed with the chair of the Committee on Appeals (in care of the secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 8765 West Higgins Road, Chicago, Illinois 60631) and shall set forth the specific charge or charges.

d. Upon the filing of a written petition, the Executive Committee of the Synod Council may temporarily suspend the officer from service in the synod without prejudice, but with continuation of compensation, including benefits, if the officer is a salaried employee of the synod.

e. In the case of alleged physical or mental incapacity of an officer of the synod, the procedures outlined in †S8.56. shall be followed, and such officer shall comply with the decision of the Synod Council. If such officer fails or refuses to comply, the Synod Council may proceed to petition for recall or dismissal as follows:

1) the Synod Council will submit a written report of their findings and the basis of their decision to the Committee on Appeals.

- j. the Committee on Appeals, exclusive of any members who are disqualified, shall review the findings and decision of the Synod Council and by an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of those present and voting may adopt the findings and grant the petition.
  
- f. If the synod officer is a minister of Word and Sacrament, grounds for recall or dismissal include those set forth in ELCA bylaw 20.22.01. and as defined under the process described in ELCA constitutional provisions 20.21. and 20.22. as grounds for discipline. If the officer is a minister of Word and Service, grounds for recall or dismissal include those set forth in ELCA bylaw 20.23.01. and as defined under the process described in ELCA constitutional provisions 20.21. and 20.22. as grounds for discipline.
  
- g. If the officer is a layperson, grounds for recall or dismissal include those set forth in ELCA bylaw 20.41.01. as grounds for discipline.
  
- h. If the case of alleged willful disregard or violation of the constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions, or of alleged conduct as would subject the officer to disciplinary action, the following procedures shall apply:
  - 1) the petition shall be referred to the Committee on Appeals, which shall function as the discipline hearing committee that shall conduct a hearing in accordance with the rules provided for in ELCA bylaw 20.22.14. except to the extent that those rules are in conflict with the provisions of this bylaw; and
  - 2) the members of the Committee on Appeals, other than those who are disqualified, may grant the petition by an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of those present and voting.
  
- i. Written notice of a decision by the Committee on Appeals that the charges have been sustained shall be given to the affected officer and to the Synod Council, and the office shall be vacated.

†S8.58. If the bishop is to be temporarily absent from the synod for an extended period not to exceed 90 days, the bishop, after consultation with the presiding bishop and 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  
NOMINATION 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 consisting of eight (8) members who shall be appointed by the Synod Council to serve for each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly. Additional nominations may be made from the floor for all elections for which nominations are made by the Nominating Committee.
- S9.03.01. The Nominating Committee shall be appointed by the Synod Council in accordance with the criteria established by S6.04. of this constitution.
- S9.03.02. The secretary shall furnish the committee with a list of vacancies to be filled at the Synod Assembly; including when appropriate the officers of the synod, members of the Synod Council, members of the Churchwide Assembly, members of the Consultation Committee, members of the Committee on Discipline and members of the Camp Board.
- S9.03.03. The Nominating Committee shall:
- a. solicit from the congregations of the synod names of persons to be considered for nomination;
  - b. obtain at least two (2) nominees for each vacancy from the appropriate conference. The leadership in those conferences should be consulted in order to facilitate compliance with Bylaw S10.01.02.;
  - c. obtain consent from all nominees;
  - d. prepare a biographical sketch of each nominee which shall include occupation, activity in the church and activity in the community; and
  - e. submit its report for inclusion in the pre-assembly report distributed to the voting members-elect of the Synod Assembly.
- 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 receive the

greatest number of legal votes on the second ballot, and two- thirds of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. The fourth ballot shall be limited to the three persons (plus ties) who receive the greatest number of legal votes on the third ballot, and 60% of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. On subsequent ballots a majority of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. These ballots shall be limited to the two persons (plus ties) who receive the greatest number of legal votes on the previous ballot.

- S9.05. The Nominating Committee shall nominate at least one person for vice-president; additional nominations may be made from the floor.
- S9.06. The Synod Council shall nominate at least one person for secretary; additional nominations may be made from the floor.
- S9.07. If the treasurer is elected, the Synod Council shall nominate at least one person for said office; additional nominations may be made from the floor.
- S9.08. In all elections, except for the bishop, the names of the persons receiving the highest number of legal votes, but not elected by a majority of the 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 representatives to the steering committee of its region.
- †S9.12. Background checks and screening shall be required and completed for persons nominated as synod officers prior to their election, if possible, or as soon as practical after their election. The specific procedures and timing of background checks and screening shall be determined by the Synod Council.

## **Chapter 10** **SYNOD COUNCIL**

- †S10.01. The Synod Council consisting of the four officers of this 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 and the young adult member, shall be three years.

S10.01.01. All authority of this synod between meetings of the Synod Assembly shall be exercised by or under the direction of the Synod Council in a manner consistent with the ELCA's and this synod's constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions. The Synod Council shall consist of four (4) officers of this synod; eleven (11) conference representatives (one from each conference); one (1) youth member (not yet 18 at the time of election); and one (1) young adult member (between 18 and 30 at the time of election) and three (3) at-large members appointed by the Synod Council to ensure the proper balances as described in S6.04 of this constitution. Top priority for the at-large appointments to Synod Council shall be given to an African American, Asian, Hispanic, Native American or per S6.04. Total council membership shall be twenty (20).

S10.01.02. At each Synod Assembly, members shall be elected from the appropriate conferences of the eleven (11) conferences as designated below. Members of the Synod Council shall continue to serve until the term to which they were elected expires. At the 2014 Synod Assembly and every 3 years thereafter a representative shall be elected for conferences 2, 6, 7 & 8. At the 2015 Synod Assembly and every 3 years thereafter, a representative shall be elected for conference 3, 9 & 11. At the 2016 Synod Assembly and every 3 years thereafter a representative shall be elected for conferences 1, 4, 5 & 10.

The members elected or appointed to succeed those members whose terms expire shall become members of the Synod Council at the close of such meeting and shall hold office until the close of the third regular meeting of the Synod Assembly after their election and until their successors have been elected. Members of the Synod Council who have served one full term may succeed themselves once.

The youth member and young adult member shall be elected for two (2) year terms and may succeed themselves once.

S10.01.03. A majority of the voting members of the Synod Assembly may remove any member of the Synod Council, with cause, and fill the vacancy, subject to the provisions of Ohio law governing the removal of trustees. Vacancies caused by such removal and

not filled by the members of the Synod Assembly at the meeting at which such removal shall have been made, or any vacancy caused by the death or resignation of any member of the Synod Council or for any other reason, and newly created memberships in the Synod Council resulting from any increase in the authorized number of members, may be filled by the affirmative vote of a majority of the members of the Synod Council then in office; provided, however, that any member so elected to fill such vacancy shall serve for the unexpired term of his or her predecessor. The term of any member elected to fill a newly created membership in the Synod Council shall expire at the next succeeding regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.

†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, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, and make a report to the Synod Assembly of the Synod Council's actions in this regard.
- e. Issue letters of call to Ministers of Word and Sacrament and Ministers of Word and Service authorized by Chapter 7 of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*.
- f. Fill vacancies until the next regular meeting of the Synod Assembly except as may otherwise be provided in the constitution, bylaws, or continuing resolutions of the 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 or continuing resolutions of this synod, or as may be delegated to it by the Synod Assembly.
- S10.04. Any proposal to appropriate funds, whether by amendment to the budget or otherwise, which is presented to a meeting of the Synod Assembly without the approval of the Synod Council shall require a two-thirds vote for adoption.
- S10.05. No elected or appointed 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 he or she was elected, the office filled by such member shall at once become vacant.
- S10.06.01. Attendance at every Synod Council Meeting is expected. An absence may be excused by notifying the Vice President of the anticipated absence prior to the meeting. Two consecutive unexcused absences will result in a consultation with the Vice President and/or Synod Bishop to determine the member's intent and availability to continue serving. Three consecutive unexcused absences will constitute a resignation from the Synod Council and 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. Regular meetings of the Synod Council shall be held at such times and places as the Council from time to time by resolution shall determine. There shall be at least four (4) meetings annually. No notice shall be required for any regular meeting of the Synod Council; but a copy of every resolution fixing or changing the time or place of regular meetings shall be personally distributed to every member at least five (5) days before the first meeting held pursuant thereto.
- S10.07.02. Special meetings of the Synod Council shall be held whenever called by the bishop, or by a majority of the members of the Synod Council then in office. Written notice of the time and place of holding each special meeting shall be given to each member of the Synod Council at least five (5) days before the meeting by personal delivery, mail, email or fax. Any and all business may be transacted at any special meeting and the notice shall specify the purpose of the meeting or the business that may be transacted thereat.

- S10.07.03. The Synod Council may hold its meetings in such place or places in the State of Michigan as the Council from time to time shall determine.
- S10.07.04. A majority of the members of the Synod Council shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business and the act of a majority of the members present at any meeting of the Council at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the Council. Attendance of a member at a meeting constitutes a waiver of notice thereof except where a member attends for the express purpose of objecting to the transaction of any business because the meeting is not lawful or valid. If at any meeting of the Synod Council there be less than a quorum present, a majority of those present may adjourn the meeting to another time, date and/or place.
- S10.07.05. The vice-president shall preside at all meetings of the Synod Council, but in the absence of the vice-president, a chair shall be elected from the members present. The secretary of the synod shall act as secretary of all meetings of the Synod Council; but in the absence of the secretary, the chair may appoint any person to act as secretary of the meeting.
- S10.07.06. A member of the Synod Council who is present at a meeting of the Synod Council at which action on any matter is taken shall be presumed to have assented to the action unless such member's dissent shall be entered in the minutes of the meeting or unless such member shall file a written dissent to such action with the person acting as secretary immediately after the adjournment of the meeting. It shall be the duty of the secretary to record such dissent in the corporate minutes at the appropriate place. Such right to dissent shall not apply to a member who voted in favor of such action.
- S10.08. *Robert's Rules of Order*, latest edition, shall govern parliamentary procedure of all meetings of the Synod Council.
- S.10.08.01 To the extent permitted by state law, meetings of the Synod Council and its committees may be held electronically or by telephone conference, and notice of all meetings may be provided electronically.

**Chapter 11**  
**COMMITTEES**  
**(names of other organizational units)**

- †S11.01. There shall be an Executive committee, a Consultation Committee, a Committee on Discipline, a Mutual Ministry Committee, an Audit Committee and such other committees as the synod may from time to time determine. The duties and functions of such committees, or any other organization units created by the 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 Synod Council shall annually appoint from among its members an Executive Committee which shall be constituted and shall have such powers and duties as shall be set forth in these bylaws, or as the Synod Council may determine, consistent with the provisions of these bylaws. The Synod Council may from time to time appoint such other committees and any organizational units from among its members or otherwise as it may deem desirable, and shall provide for their powers and duties subject to any applicable provisions or requirements of the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of the ELCA and this synod. Each committee shall elect its own chair, shall to the extent not otherwise provided by the Synod Council or by these bylaws, determine its own rules, and shall submit to the Synod Council at each meeting thereof a report of the actions, if any, which such committee may have taken since the previous meeting of the Synod Council, which actions shall be subject to revision or alteration by the Synod Council; provided, however, that no rights of third parties shall be affected adversely by any such revision or alteration.
- S11.01.02. The Executive Committee shall consist of the bishop, the other officers of the synod, and such additional members of the Synod Council as the Council shall elect from time to time. A majority of the members of the Executive Committee shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting thereof and, except as otherwise provided by law or these bylaws, the act of a majority of the members of the Executive Committee present at any meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the Executive Committee. The secretary of the synod shall be the secretary of the Executive Committee. Except as otherwise directed by the Synod Council, the Executive Committee shall have and may exercise, between meetings of the Synod Council, all of the power of the Synod Council in the management of the affairs of the synod, including the power to authorize the seal of the synod to be affixed to all papers which may require it, in such manner as the Executive Committee shall deem to be in the best interests of the synod. The Executive Committee shall have the power to act as such, within its powers and rules, notwithstanding the failure of the Synod Council at any time and for any reason to appoint as members of the Executive Committee all of those officers and other persons designated to serve thereon by the provisions of the first sentence of this S11.01.02.
- †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 rostered ministers and half shall be lay persons, who shall each be elected by the Synod Assembly for a term of six years without consecutive reelection. The functions of the Consultation Committee are set forth in Chapter 20 of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* and in Chapter 17 of this constitution. The size of the Consultation Committee, in accordance with this provision, shall be defined in this synod's bylaws.

- S11.02.01. As provided in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, the Synod Assembly shall elect a Consultation Committee consisting of twelve (12) persons, of whom five (5) shall be rostered ministers. Terms shall be for six (6) years without consecutive re-election. Anything herein to the contrary notwithstanding, all members shall serve at least until their respective successors have been elected. The members elected to succeed those members whose terms expire shall become members of the Consultation Committee at the close of such meeting and shall hold office until the close of the sixth regular meeting of the Synod Assembly after their election and until their successors have been elected.
- †S11.03. The Committee on Discipline of this synod shall consist of 12 persons of whom six shall be rostered ministers and six shall be lay persons, who shall each be elected by the Synod Assembly for a term of six years without consecutive re-election.
- a. The functions of the committee on Discipline of this synod are set forth in Chapter 20 of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*.
  - b. The Synod Council shall fill vacancies on the Committee on Discipline for any unexpired term.
- S11.03.01. As provided in the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Synod Assembly shall elect to the Committee on Discipline twelve (12) persons, of whom six (6) shall be ordained ministers. Terms shall be for six (6) years without consecutive re-election. Anything herein to the contrary notwithstanding, all members shall serve at least until their respective successors have been elected. The members elected to succeed those members whose terms expire shall become members elected to the Committee on Discipline at the close of such meeting and shall hold office until the close of the sixth regular meeting of the Synod Assembly after their election and until their successors have been elected.
- †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. Except as otherwise specifically provided for in these bylaws, and insofar as possible, each committee and other organizational unit shall consist of at least seven (7) members who possess the necessary knowledge and competence to be effective members of such committees and units and in accordance with the criteria established by S6.04. of this constitution. Committee membership appointments shall be for two (2) years. Terms shall be staggered. Members may be re-appointed once. Exceptions may be granted by the Synod Council.
- S11.04.02. The Synod Council, in consultation with the bishop, will establish any committees/task forces/working groups that are needed to support the mission and

ministry of the synod and churchwide expression of the ELCA. The continued existence and work of these committees/task forces/working groups will be reviewed annually.

- †S11.05. The Audit Committee of this synod shall consist of three to six persons, none of whom is a member of the synod staff. Up to half of the committee members may be Synod Council members. The Audit Committee members shall be elected by the Synod Council for a term of three years and be eligible for re-election to a second consecutive three-year term. The terms of the Audit Committee members shall be staggered. The Audit Committee shall be responsible for assisting the Synod Council in fulfilling its general oversight of the synod's accounting, financial reporting, internal control systems, and external audit processes as provided in †S15.31.
- †S11.11. 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 a congregation of this synod.

## Chapter 12

### CONFERENCES, CLUSTERS, COALITIONS OR OTHER AREA SUBDIVISIONS

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

- S12.01.01. The Synod Council shall establish any conferences, clusters and coalitions.

## Chapter 13

### CONGREGATIONS

- †S13.01. Each congregation, except those certified as congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America by the uniting churches, prior to being listed in the roster of congregations of this synod, shall adopt the *Model Constitution for Congregations* or one acceptable to this synod, which 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 governance provisions as provided in Chapter 9 of the constitution and bylaws of this church.
- 2) Adopt governing documents that include fully and without alterations the Preamble, Chapter 1, where applicable, and all required provisions of Chapters 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 15, 16, 17, and 18 in the *Model Constitution for Congregations* consistent with requirements of the constitution, 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 Chapter 16 and 18 of the *Model Constitution for Congregations*.
- 3) Accept the commitments expected of all congregations of this church as stated in C6.01., C6.02., and C6.03., of the *Model Constitution for Congregations*.

- b. **Congregations from another church body.** If a congregation is a member of another church body, the leadership of the congregation first should consult with the appropriate authorities of that church body before taking action to leave its current church body. After such consultation, leadership should contact the ELCA synod bishop or staff where the congregation is located. The synod bishop or synod staff where the transferring or independent congregation is located shall confer with the congregation to assure its understanding and acceptance of commitment to and affiliation with this church.
- c. **Recognition and reception.** Recognition and reception into this church of transferring or independent congregations by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is based on the judgment of the synod and action by the synod through the Synod Council and Synod Assembly. The synod bishop shall provide for prompt reporting of such additions to the secretary of this church for addition to the roster of congregations.

S13.01.01. Each congregation of this synod shall be incorporated under the laws of the state of its location.

†S13.02. It shall be the responsibility of each congregation of this synod to elect 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. Normatively, congregations should hold elections prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly. The number of persons to be elected by each congregation and other qualifications shall be as prescribed in guidelines established by this synod.

- S13.11. When a rostered minister resigns, the Congregation Council shall receive the letter of resignation, report it to the congregation, and at once notify the bishop of the synod.
- S13.12. A congregation under financial obligation to its former rostered minister shall make satisfactory settlement of the obligation before calling a successor.
- †S13.20. A congregation considering a relocation shall confer with the bishop of the synod in which it is territorially located and the appropriate unit of the churchwide organization before any steps are taken leading to such action. The approval of the Synod Council shall be received before any such action is effected.
- †S13.21. A congregation considering development of an additional site to be used regularly for worship shall confer with the bishop of the synod in which it is territorially located and the appropriate unit of the churchwide organization before any steps are taken leading to such action.
- †S13.22. Each congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America within the territory of this synod, except those which are in partnership with the Slovak Zion Synod, shall establish and maintain a relationship with this synod.
- †S13.23. Provision 9.71. of the constitution of this church shall govern the relationship of this synod and a congregation of this synod regarding the property of the congregation. This synod may transfer or convey property to a congregation of this synod, subject to restrictions accepted by the congregation, including provision that if the Synod Council, in its sole and exclusive discretion, determines (1) that the property is not being used to serve the mission and ministry needs of this church, or (2) that the congregation has transferred, encumbered, mortgaged, or in any way burdened or impaired any right, title or interest in the property without the prior approval of the Synod Council, then title to the property shall revert to the synod, and the congregation, upon written demand, shall reconvey the property to the synod.
- †S13.24. The Synod Council, itself or through trustees appointed by it, may take charge and control of the property of a congregation of this synod to hold, manage, and convey the same on behalf of this synod, if any of the following apply:
- a. The congregation has disbanded, ceased to worship, or otherwise ceased to exist as a congregation.

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

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

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

S13.30. **Discipline**

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

S13.40. **Synod-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 ministry in this synod shall be authorized by the bishop of this synod.

†S14.12. Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in

America,

a. Every minister of Word and Sacrament shall:

- 1) preach the Word;
- 2) administer the sacraments;
- 3) conduct public worship;
- 4) provide pastoral care
- 5) seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel;
- 6) impart knowledge of this church and its wider ministry through available channels of effective communication;
- 7) witness to the Kingdom of God in the community, in the nation and abroad; and
- 8) speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, and embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations.

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 Congregational Council;
- 4) with the council, administer discipline;
- 5) endeavor to increase the support given by the congregation to work of the churchwide organization and of this synod; and
- 6) encourage adherence to covenantal relationship with this church as expressed in the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*.

S14.13. The pastor

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

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

S14.15. Each ordained minister on the roster of this synod shall submit a report of ministry to the bishop of the synod at least 90 days prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.

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

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

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

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

- a. The call of a congregation, when accepted by a pastor, shall constitute a

continuing mutual relationship and commitment which shall be terminated only by the pastor's death or, following consultation with the synod bishop for any of 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) inability to conduct the pastoral office effectively in view of disability or 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 disability or 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 the synod,
- 1) the bishop, who has sole discretion, may investigate such conditions personally together with a committee of two ordained 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 ordained ministers and one layperson.

- c. In case of alleged disability or incapacity under paragraph a.4) above, the bishop's committee shall obtain and document competent medical opinion concerning the pastor's condition. When a disability or incapacity is evident to the committee, the bishop of this synod may declare the pastorate vacant. When the pastorate is declared vacant, the Synod Council shall list the pastor on the roster of ministers of Word and Sacrament with disability status. Upon resumption of the ability to conduct the office effectively, the bishop shall take steps to enable the pastor to resume the ministry, either in the congregation last served or in another appropriate call.
- d. In the case of alleged local difficulties that imperil the effective functioning of the congregation under paragraph a.3) above, the bishop's committee shall endeavor to hear from all concerned persons, after which the bishop together with the committee shall present their recommendations first to the pastor and then to the congregation. The recommendations of the bishop's committee must address whether the pastor's call should come to an end and, if so, may suggest appropriate severance arrangements. The committee may also propose other actions that should be undertaken by the congregation and by the pastor, if appropriate. If the pastor and congregation agree to carry out such recommendations, no further action need be taken by the synod.
- e. If either party fails to assent to the recommendations of the bishop's committee concerning the pastor's call, the congregation may dismiss the pastor only at a legally called meeting after consultation with the bishop, either (a) by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee did not recommend termination of the call, or (b) by a majority vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee recommended termination of the call.
- f. If, in the course of proceedings described in paragraph c. or paragraph d. above, the bishop's committee concludes that there may be grounds for disciplinary action, the committee shall make recommendations concerning disciplinary action in accordance with the provisions of this church's constitution bylaws, and continuing resolutions.

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

†S14.21. The 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 the secretary's 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 ordained ministers 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 records, for the period for which the interim pastor was responsible, are in order.

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

S14.25. All ministers of Word and Sacrament under a call shall attend meetings of the Synod Assembly, and the pastors of congregations shall also attend the meetings of the conference, cluster, coalition, or other area subdivision to which the congregation belongs. In the case of unavoidable absence from the Synod Assembly, the minister shall submit a proper excuse to the bishop.

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

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

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

- a. Be rooted in the Word of God, for proclamation and service;

- b. Advocate a prophetic diakonia that commits itself to risk-taking and innovative service on the frontiers of the Church's outreach, giving particular attention to the suffering places in God's world;
- c. Speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, and embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations;
- d. Equip the baptized for ministry in God's world that affirms the gifts of all people;
- e. Encourage mutual relationships that invite participation and accompaniment of others in God's mission;
- f. Practice stewardship that respects God's gift of time, talents, and resources;
- g. Be grounded in a gathered community for ongoing diaconal formation;
- h. Share knowledge of this church and its wider ministry of the gospel, and advocate for the work of all expressions of this church; and
- i. Identify and encourage qualified persons to prepare for ministry of the gospel.

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

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

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

- a. Each congregation of this synod shall consult the bishop of this synod before taking any steps leading to the extending of a call to a prospective minister of Word and Service.
- b. For issuance of a letter of call to a minister of Word and Service or candidate by a congregation of this synod in accord with ELCA constitutional provision 7.71., a two-thirds vote shall be required of members of the

congregation present and voting at a meeting regularly called for the purpose of issuing such a call.

- c. When the congregation has voted to issue a call to a prospective minister of Word and Service, the letter of call shall be submitted to the bishop of this synod for the bishop's signature.

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

†S14.43. The provisions for termination of the mutual relationship between a minister of Word and Service and a congregation shall be as follows:

- a. The call of a congregation, when accepted by a minister of Word and Service, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment which shall be terminated only by death or, following consultation with the synod bishop, for any of 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) inability to conduct the office effectively in view of disability or 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 disability or 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, who has 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 disability or incapacity under paragraph a.4) above, the bishop's committee shall obtain and document competent medical opinion concerning the minister of Word and Service's condition. When a disability or incapacity is evident to the committee, the bishop of this synod may declare the position vacant and the minister of Word and Service shall be listed on the roster of ministers of Word and Service with disability status. Upon resumption of the ability to conduct the office effectively, the bishop shall take steps to enable the minister of Word and Service to resume the ministry, either in the congregation last served or in another appropriate call.
  - d. In the case of alleged local difficulties that imperil the effective functioning of the congregation under paragraph a.3) above, the bishop's committee shall endeavor to hear from all concerned persons, after which the bishop together with the committee shall present their recommendations first to the minister of Word and Service and then to the congregation. The recommendations of the bishop's committee address whether the minister of Word and Service's call should come to an end and, if so, may suggest appropriate severance arrangements. The committee may also propose other actions that should be undertaken by the congregation and by the minister of Word and Service, if appropriate. If the minister of Word and Service and congregation agree to carry out such recommendations, no further action need be taken by the synod.
  - e. If either party fails to assent to the recommendations of the bishop's committee concerning the minister of Word and Service's call, the congregation may dismiss the minister of Word and Service only at a legally

called meeting after consultation with the bishop, either (a) by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee did not recommend termination of the call, or (b) by a majority vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee recommended termination of the call.

f. If, in the course of proceedings described in paragraph c. or paragraph d. above, the bishop's committee concludes that there may be grounds for disciplinary action, the committee shall make recommendations concerning disciplinary action in accordance with the provisions of this church's constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.

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

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

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

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

## **Chapter 15**

### **FINANCIAL MATTERS**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

†S15.31. This synod shall arrange to have an annual audit of its financial records conducted by a certified public accountant firm selected 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.

†S15.32. This synod shall maintain adequate, continuous insurance coverage in accordance with standards recommended by the churchwide organization. Insurance programs offered or endorsed by the churchwide organization shall be deemed to fulfill this

obligation.

## **\*Chapter 16 INDEMNIFICATION**

- †S16.01. Subject to the limitations and duties imposed by law, each person who is or was made or threatened to be made a party to any proceeding by reason of the present or former capacity of that person as a synod Council member, officer, employee, or committee member of this synod shall be indemnified against all costs and expenses incurred by that person in connection with the proceeding. Indemnification of any person by reason of that person's capacity as a director, officer, employee, or committee member of any other organization, regardless of its form or relationship to this synod, is subject to the provisions of †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 †16.04., a disciplinary hearing or related process described in Chapter 20 of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*.
  - b. The term “indemnification” includes reimbursement and advances of costs and expenses for judgments, penalties, fines, settlements, excise taxes, reasonable attorneys’ fees, disbursements, and similar required expenditures.
- †S16.02. Whenever a person who, while a Synod Council member, officer, committee member, or employee of this synod, is or was serving at the request of this synod as (or whose duties in that position involve or involved service in the capacity of) a director, officer, partner, trustee, employee, or agent of another organization, is or was made or threatened to be made a party to a proceeding by reason of such capacity, then such person shall not be entitled to indemnification unless (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 †S16.01. or †S16.02.
- †S16.04. When written charges against a rostered minister of this church are made in

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

## **Chapter 17**

### **CONSULTATION AND ADJUDICATION**

- †S17.01. The synod bishop and the Executive Committee of the Synod Council shall be available to give counsel when disputes arise within the synod.
- †S17.02. The synod bishop and the Executive Committee of the Synod Council shall receive expressions of concern from rostered ministers of this church, congregations, and organizations within this synod; provide a forum in which the parties concerned can seek to work out matters causing distress or conflict; and make appropriate recommendations for their resolution. When a concern relates directly to the synod bishop, the synod vice president will lead the Executive Committee's efforts at resolving the matter. When the matter at issue cannot be resolved in this manner, applicable procedures for investigation, decision, appeal, and adjudication shall be followed. Allegations or charges that could lead to the discipline of a rostered minister of this church shall not be addressed by the Executive Committee but shall be resolved through the disciplinary process set forth in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*.
- †S17.03. When there is disagreement between or among congregations of this synod on a substantive issue that cannot be resolved by the parties, the council of an affected congregation may petition the synod bishop for a consultation after informing the other affected congregation(s) of its intent to do so. If this consultation fails to resolve the issue, the bishop shall refer the matter to the Consultation Committee of the synod, which shall undertake efforts to find an appropriate solution. If the Consultation Committee's efforts fail to resolve the issue(s), the entire matter shall be referred to the Synod Council for adjudication by whatever process the council deems necessary. The decision of the Synod Council shall be final.
- †S17.04. When conferences, clusters, coalitions, or area subdivisions of this synod have a disagreement on a substantive issue that they cannot resolve, the aggrieved party or parties may petition the synod bishop and the Executive Committee of the Synod Council requesting a consultation after informing the other affected parties of their intent to do so. In this case the decision of the Executive Committee shall prevail, except that, upon the motion of a member of the Synod Council, the decision shall be referred to the Synod Council for final action.

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

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

**\*Chapter 18**

**AMENDMENTS, BYLAWS, AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS**

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

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

†S18.12.     Whenever the secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America officially informs the 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 the 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.     Introduced with the support of at least two-thirds voting members and having been approved by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting at a regular meeting of the Synod Assembly, an amendment may be adopted unchanged by a two-thirds vote at the next regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.

- b. The Synod Council may propose an amendment, with notice to be sent to the congregations of the 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 the next 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. The 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 the Synod Council. Newly adopted continuing resolutions and amendments to existing continuing resolutions shall be reported to the secretary of this church.

**Continuing Resolutions:**

SA11.05.B **Sale of Buildings**

When real estate is sold by the synod, the proceeds shall be used first to reimburse the synod for any caring or holding costs incurred by the synod, with the balance to be held in a Southeast Michigan Synod Fund for Mission. The purpose of which shall be to provide grants for the support of mission.

SA11.05.A **Fund For Mission**

The Southeast Michigan Synod's Endowment Fund be dissolved and its assets and liabilities be transferred intact to the Southeast Michigan Synod's Fund for Mission in order to provide more flexibility in funding the mission of the Synod and its congregations.

The assets of the fund for mission shall be invested at the direction of the Synod's Treasurer in consultation with the finance committee.

Disbursements from the funds of mission shall be at the direction of the Synod Council in consultation with Synod Bishop and outreach committee.

The Fund for Mission shall not be available for loans or inter fund transfers for any purpose.

SC11.08A **Bishop's Election Process**

This process shall be used whenever there is to be a bishop's election and the current bishop is not seeking reelection.

Each congregation shall be notified as soon as possible to identify their voting members for the upcoming Synod Assembly no later than 15 weeks prior to the date of the Synod Assembly, so that they might participate in the pre-assembly Bishop's Election Process. This may require that congregations hold special congregational meetings to elect their voting members.

The Synod Council shall appoint a Bishop's Election Task Force (hereafter "Task Force") to carry out this process.

Conference Meetings – Each conference will meet simultaneously on a Saturday or Sunday 10 to 12 weeks prior to the date of the Synod Assembly. The date shall be chosen by the Task Force. Conferences may meet individually or in groupings of not more than three. The meeting will be open to all and voting members are strongly encouraged to participate. The meeting will be facilitated by the conference's dean. Those in attendance will receive information about the synod and the responsibilities of the bishop prepared by the Task Force. The attendees will then be asked to consider a set of questions developed by the Task Force designed to identify the conference's vision, mission for the Synod, and the issues they deem important. It is expected that discussion would last for two to three hours. The discussion may include discussion of individuals who might be potential nominees. At the end of the discussion, each attendee will receive a slip of paper and be asked to write down the name of an individual whom they would like to see serve as bishop of this synod. The number of slips given to members of the same congregation shall not exceed the number of voting members to which that congregation is entitled. The slips will be collected and sealed in an envelope which will be forwarded to the Task Force.

The Task Force will receive the names submitted by conferences as well as a report by each conference on their discussions and answers to the various questions. The Task Force will prepare a summary of all of the responses and tabulate the names proposed. The Task Force will contact the top ten names, plus ties, if any, and inquire whether the individual is open to participate in the pre-assembly Bishop's Election Process. In the event a potential nominee declines to participate, the Task Force shall contact the next name so that ten potential nominees who are willing to participate are identified. The consent of the top ten potential nominees will be obtained and background checks will be completed.

The Task Force will prepare a set of questions based on the information provided by the conference meetings. These questions will be presented to each of the

potential nominees. The potential nominees will have the ability to answer, with the answer to each question being limited to 250 words. The potential nominees will also be asked to complete a biographical information form. The answers will be due back to the Task Force within two weeks. All answers and biographical information will be reproduced without editing and will be posted on the synod's website as a part of the pre-assembly report.

A second set of conference meetings will be scheduled for two to four weeks of prior to the Synod Assembly. There will be four meetings of no more than three conferences each. At these meetings the potential nominees will have the ability to address the attendees, answer questions from the attendees, so that the voting members will have the opportunity to get to know the potential nominees and the potential nominees will be better able to discern the potential of a call to serve as bishop. The Task Force will determine the exact format of these meetings.

At the Synod Assembly, the election process will commence with the ecclesiastical ballot as provided for in the Synod's governing documents. The Synod Assembly election process would include the traditional addresses by the top seven candidates as determined by the balloting process, with question and answer session by the top three candidates and three break-out sessions with the top three candidates as determined by the balloting process.

At the conclusion of tabulating the first or nominating ballot, the Elections Committee shall endeavor to contact by phone anyone listed on the Report of the Elections Committee who is not present at the Assembly, to ascertain whether they wish to remove their name from succeeding ballots.

Governing Documents as of May 2024