

**2019, 2022, and 2025 Churchwide Assembly Amendments to the  
Model Constitution for Congregations of the  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America®  
[with Rationales for 2022 and 2025]**

Prepared by the Office of the Secretary Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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**2019, 2022, and 2025 ELCA Modified Amendments Specific to the  
First Lutheran Church of Bothell Constitution**

Prepared by the First Lutheran Church of Bothell Congregation Council

**Introduction:**

This document outlines the amendments to the Constitution of First Lutheran Church (FLC) of Bothell, incorporating updates from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) as adopted in 2019, 2022, and 2025, along with FLC Council-approved amendments specific to FLC. Changes originating from the ELCA are based on Churchwide Assembly actions and reflect evolving theological, organizational, and governance standards.

Provisions within the Model Constitution for Congregations are of two types:

1. **Those provisions marked with an asterisk are required when a congregation amends its governing documents.** They must be used without alteration or amendment of the text in any manner (i.e., neither additions nor deletions are permissible). Such provisions go into effect immediately upon approval by a majority vote of those voting members present and voting at any legally called meeting of the congregation, provided that they have been presented to the congregation at least 30 days prior to the meeting.
2. **Provisions not marked with an asterisk are non-required provisions. These provisions represent wording recommended by the Churchwide Assembly.** If the congregation chooses to incorporate them into the congregation's constitution exactly as presented here, these provisions require a majority vote of those voting members present and voting at any legally called meeting of the congregation, provided that they have been presented to the congregation at least 30 days prior to the meeting.

If the wording of non-required provisions is altered or amended in any way from the text presented in the ELCA Model Constitution for Congregations, the provisions must be approved at one congregation meeting by a majority vote and then must be ratified unchanged by a two-thirds vote at the next regular meeting of the congregation. (See Model Constitution for Congregations, \*C16.04. for more detail.)

The formats used to identify provision changes within this document are as follows:

- Additions are shown with underlined text
- Deletions are shown with struck-through ~~text~~
- ELCA Amendments used without alteration are highlighted in yellow
- Provisions modified by the FLC Congregation Council are highlighted in blue.

In addition, each amendment is clearly labeled to indicate its origin (ELCA 2019, ELCA 2022, ELCA 2025, or FLC).

In 2019, the Churchwide Assembly authorized the secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to take the action as specified below. It should be noted that neither the provisions listed below, nor their full texts, appear in the body of this amendments document because there are no other changes to these provisions beyond what is identified below.

- strike “synodical” and replace with “synod.” Full texts for the following constitution provisions are not included within these amendments: \*C6.04.g2); \*C6.05.g;\*C9.02.; C9.15; \*C9.22.; C10.02.; C12.12; \*C20.02.; \*C20.03.; \*C20.04.; and \*C20.05.
- strike “the congregation” and replace with “this congregation” where appropriate. Full texts for the following constitution provisions are not included within these amendments: C1.11.; C5.03.; \*C6.03.; \*C9.02; \*C9.05.a.3); \*C9.05.a.7).; \*C9.05.a.8).; \*C9.05.a.9).; \*C9.05.b.2).; \*C9.05.d).; \*C9.05.e).; \*C9.07.; \*C9.11.; \*C9.12.; C9.15.; C10.02.; C10.06.; C11.01.b.; C11.02.; C12.01, C12.05.b.; C12.08.; C13.08.; title of Chapter 14; C15.01.; \*C15.02.; \*C15.05.; \*C15.07.; \*C16.01.; \*C16.03.; \*C16.04.; \*C17.03.; \*C18.01.; and \*C18.02.
- make editorial changes so that the Model Constitution for Congregations follows the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Constitution for Synods.

Where rationale was available for specific changes—whether from ELCA sources or FLC Church Council discernment—it has been included for context. These rationales are not part of the amendments with which they are associated, they are not part of the Model Constitution for Congregations, and they are not intended to be incorporated into the constitutions of congregations.

This document serves as a record of this congregation’s ongoing commitment to faithful governance, aligning with both the wider church and the specific mission and ministry of First Lutheran Church of Bothell.

## **PREAMBLE (ELCA 2019)**

“The” stricken.

## **Chapter 1. NAME AND INCORPORATION**

### **C1.02. (ELCA 2025)**

For the purpose of this constitution and the accompanying bylaws [and continuing resolutions], the congregation of (insert full legal name) is hereinafter designated as “this congregation.”

*Rationale: Insertion for comprehensiveness.*

## **Chapter 3. NATURE OF THE CHURCH**

### **\*C3.04. (ELCA 2019)**

~~The~~ **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 4: STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

### **\*C4.02. (ELCA 2022)**

To participate in God’s mission, this congregation as a part of the Church shall: [...]

d. Serve in response to God’s love to meet human needs, caring for the sick and the aged, advocating dignity, ~~and,~~ 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 ~~powerless~~ oppressed and committing itself to their needs.

*Rationale: [This amendment was proposed on the assembly floor during the 2019 Churchwide Assembly; consequently, no rationale was provided prior to the assembly.]*

**\*C4.03. (ELCA 2019)**

To fulfill these purposes, this congregation shall:

- g. Motivate its members to provide financial support for ~~the this~~ congregation's ministry and the ministry of ~~other parts the other expressions~~ of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

**\*C4.05. (ELCA 2019)**

This congregation shall ~~from time to time~~, adopt and periodically review a mission statement which will provide specific direction for its programs.

**CHAPTER 5: POWERS OF THE CONGREGATION**

**\*C5.03. (ELCA 2019)**

Only such authority as is delegated to the Congregation Council or other organizational units in this congregation's governing documents is recognized. All remaining authority is retained by ~~the this~~ congregation. ~~The This~~ congregation is authorized to:

- d. terminate the call of ~~a~~ minister of Word and Service in conformity with the constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America;
- j. (FLC) elect its Congregation Council and Nominating Committee, and require them to carry out their duties in accordance with the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions; and

*Rationale – added Nominating Committee to strengthen accountability, clarity, and alignment within the governance structure of First Lutheran Church.*

**\*C5.04. (ELCA 2019)**

This congregation shall ~~choose elect~~ from among its voting members laypersons to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly as well as persons to represent it at meetings of any conference, cluster, coalition, or other area subdivision of which it is a member. The number of persons to be elected by ~~the this~~ congregation and other qualifications shall be as prescribed in guidelines established by the (insert name of synod) of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

**\*C5.04. (ELCA 2025)**

This congregation or the Congregation Council shall elect from among ~~its the~~ voting members of the congregation laypersons to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly as well as persons to represent it at meetings of any conference, cluster,

coalition, or other area subdivision of which it is a member. The number of persons to be elected ~~by this congregation~~ and other qualifications shall be as prescribed in guidelines established by the (insert name of synod) of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

*Rationale: This change allows for lay voting members of the Synod Assembly to be elected either by the congregation or by the Congregation Council. Current language requires election by the congregation.*

**C5.05. ( ELCA 2019).**

This congregation shall have a mission endowment fund that will operate as specified in this congregation's bylaws **and continuing resolutions**. The purpose of the mission endowment fund is to provide for mission work beyond the operational budget of this congregation.

**CHAPTER 6: CHURCH AFFILIATION**

**\*C6.01. (ELCA 2019)**

This congregation shall be an interdependent part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or its successor, and of the (insert name of synod) ~~Synod~~ of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. This congregation is subject to the discipline of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

**\*C6.04. (ELCA 2019)**

Affiliation with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America ~~may be is~~ terminated as follows:

c. This congregation is removed from membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America according to the procedures for discipline of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America **or in accordance with provision 9.23. of the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.**

**d. The (insert name of synod) takes charge and control of the property of this congregation to hold, manage, and convey the same on behalf of the synod pursuant to †S13.24. of the synod constitution. This congregation shall have the right to appeal the decision to the next Synod Assembly.**

~~de.~~ This congregation follows the procedures outlined in \*C6.05.

**\*C6.05. ( ELCA 2019)**

This congregation may terminate its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America by the following procedure:

- a. A resolution indicating the intent to terminate its relationship must be adopted at a two legally called and conducted special meetings of the this congregation by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present at each meeting. Such The first such meeting may be held no sooner than 30 days after written notice of the meeting is received by the bishop of the synod, during which time the this congregation shall consult with the bishop and the bishop's designees, if any. The times and manner of the consultation shall be determined by the bishop in consultation with the Congregation Council. Unless he or she is a voting member of the this congregation, the bishop and the bishop's designees, if any, shall have voice but not vote at the first meeting.
- b. The Within 10 days after the resolution has been voted upon at the first meeting, the secretary of the this congregation shall submit a copy of the resolution to the bishop, attesting that the special meeting was legally called and conducted and certifying the outcome of the vote, and shall mail a copy send copies of the resolution and certification to voting members of the this congregation. This notice shall be submitted within 10 days after the resolution has been adopted.
- c. The If the resolution was adopted by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present at the first meeting, the bishop of the synod and the this congregation shall continue in consultation, as specified in paragraph a. above, during a period of at least 90 days after receipt by the synod of the notice bishop of the attestation and certification as specified in paragraph b. above.
- d. If the this congregation, after such consultation, still seeks to terminate its relationship is still considering termination of its relationship with this church, such action may be taken at a legally called and conducted special meeting by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present. Notice of the second meeting shall be mailed sent to all voting members and to the bishop at least 10 days in advance of the meeting. Unless he or she is a voting member of the this congregation, the bishop and the bishop's designees, if any, shall have voice but not vote at the second meeting.
- e. A copy of the resolution, attesting that the special meeting was legally called and conducted and certifying the outcome of the vote, shall be sent to the

bishop within 10 days after the resolution has been adopted, at which time the relationship between the congregation and this church shall be terminated subject to paragraph g. below.

Within 10 days after the resolution has been voted upon, the secretary of this congregation shall submit a copy of the resolution to the bishop, attesting that the second special meeting was legally called and conducted and certifying the outcome of the vote, and shall send copies of the resolution and certification to the voting members of the congregation. If the resolution was adopted by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present at the second meeting, the relationship between the congregation and this church shall be terminated subject to Synod Council approval as required by paragraphs f. and g. below.

- f. Unless this notification to the bishop also certifies that ~~the this~~ congregation has voted ~~by a two-thirds vote~~ to affiliate with another Lutheran denomination, ~~the this~~ congregation ~~will be conclusively presumed to be~~ shall be deemed an independent or non-Lutheran church, in which case \*C7.04. shall apply.
- f. ~~Notice of termination shall be forwarded by the bishop to the secretary of the ELCA, who shall report the termination to the Churchwide Assembly.~~
- h. If this congregation fails to achieve the required two-thirds vote of voting members present at ~~the this~~ congregation's first meeting as specified in paragraph a. above, ~~another special meeting to consider termination of relationship with this church may be called no sooner than six months after that first meeting. If this congregation or~~ fails to achieve the required two-thirds vote of voting members present at ~~the this~~ congregation's second meeting as specified in paragraph d. above, another attempt to consider termination of relationship with this church must follow all requirements of \*C6.05. and may begin no sooner than six months after ~~that second the~~ meeting at which the two-thirds vote was not achieved.

**\*C6.05. (ELCA 2022)**

This congregation may terminate its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America by the following procedure:

- a. A resolution indicating the intent to terminate its relationship must be adopted at two legally called and conducted special meetings of this congregation by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present at each meeting. The first such meeting may be held no sooner than 30 days after written notice of the meeting is received by the bishop of the synod, during which time this congregation shall consult with the bishop and

the bishop's designees, if any. The times and manner of the consultation shall be determined by the bishop in consultation with the Congregation Council. Unless ~~he or she is the bishop and/or the bishop's designees are a~~ voting members of this congregation, ~~the bishop and the bishop's designees, if any, they~~ shall have voice but not vote at the first meeting.

[...]

- d. If this congregation, after such consultation, is still considering termination of its relationship with this church, such action may be taken at a legally called and conducted special meeting by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present. Notice of the second meeting shall be sent to all voting members and to the bishop at least 10 days in advance of the meeting. Unless ~~he or she is the bishop and/or the bishop's designees are a~~ voting members of this congregation, ~~the bishop and the bishop's designees, if any, they~~ shall have voice but not vote at the second meeting.

*Rationale: Inclusive language.*

**\*C6.06. (ELCA 2019)**

If this congregation considers relocation, it 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 taken~~.

**CHAPTER 7: PROPERTY OWNERSHIP**

**\*C7.01. (ELCA 2019)**

If this congregation ceases to exist, title to undisposed property shall pass to the (insert name of synod) ~~Synod~~ of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

**\*C7.02. (ELCA 2019)**

If this congregation is removed from membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America according to its procedure for discipline ~~or pursuant to 9.23. of the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America~~, title to property shall continue to reside in this congregation.

**\*C7.03. (ELCA 2019)**

If ~~two-thirds of~~ the voting members of this congregation present at a legally called and conducted special meeting of this congregation vote to transfer to another Lutheran church body, title to property shall continue to reside in this congregation, provided the process for termination of relationship in \*C6.05. has been followed. Before this



congregation takes action to transfer to another Lutheran church body, it shall consult with representatives of the (insert name of synod) ~~Synod~~.

**\*C7.03. (ELCA 2025)**

If the voting members of this congregation present at a legally called and conducted special meeting of this congregation vote to ~~relate transfer~~ to another Lutheran church body, title to property shall continue to reside in this congregation, provided the process for termination of relationship in \*C6.05. has been followed. Before this congregation takes action to ~~relate transfer~~ to another Lutheran church body, it shall consult with representatives of the (insert name of synod).

*Rationale: Consistency with 9.71.d. of the ELCA Constitution.*

**\*C7.04. (ELCA 2019)**

If ~~two-thirds of~~ the voting members of this congregation present at a legally called and conducted special meeting of this congregation vote to become independent or relate to a non-Lutheran church body and have followed the process for termination of relationship in \*C6.05., title to property of this congregation shall continue to reside in this congregation only with the consent of the Synod Council. The Synod Council, after consultation with this congregation by the ~~established synodical~~ process established by the synod, may give approval to the request to become independent or to relate to a non-Lutheran church body, in which case title shall remain with the majority of this congregation. If the Synod Council fails to give such approval, title shall remain with those members who desire to continue as a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. In neither case does title to this congregation's property transfer to the synod.

[The following provision becomes required.]

**\*C7.05. (ELCA 2019)**

Notwithstanding the provisions of \*C7.02. and \*C7.03. above, where this congregation has received property from the synod pursuant to a deed or other instrument containing restrictions under provision 9.71.a. of the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, this congregation accepts such restrictions and:

- a. Shall not transfer, encumber, mortgage, or in any way burden or impair any right, title, or interest in the property without prior approval of the Synod Council.

- b. Shall—upon written demand by the Synod Council, pursuant to †S13.23. of the constitution of the (insert name of synod) — reconvey and transfer all right, title, and interest in the property to the synod.

## **CHAPTER 8: MEMBERSHIP**

### **\*C8.02. (ELCA 2019)**

Members shall be classified as follows:

- c. Voting members are confirmed members. Such confirmed members, during the current or preceding calendar year, shall have communed in this congregation and shall have made a contribution of record to this congregation. Members of this congregation who have satisfied these basic standards shall have the privilege of voice and vote at every regular and special meeting of the this congregation as well as the other rights and privileges ascribed to voting members by the provisions of this constitution and its bylaws. They shall not have voted as a seasonal member of another congregation of this church in the previous two calendar months.
- e. Seasonal members are voting members of other ELCA congregations of this church who wish to retain such membership but desire to participate in the life and mission of this congregation, including exercising limited voting rights in this congregation. The Congregation Council may grant seasonal membership to such persons provided that this congregation is a member of a synod where the Synod Council has approved seasonal member voting on its territory. Such seasonal members shall have all the privileges and duties of voting members except that:
- 3) they shall not have the right to vote on any matter concerning or affecting the affiliation of this congregation with the ELCA this church;

### **\*C8.05. (ELCA 2019)**

Membership in this congregation shall be terminated by any of the following:

- d. disciplinary action in accordance with ELCA constitutional provision 20.41. and the accompanying bylaws Chapter 20 of the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America;

## **CHAPTER 9: ROSTERED MINISTER**

### **\*C9.02. (ELCA 2025)**

Only This congregation may call as a pastor only:

- a. a member of the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, or
- b. a candidate for the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament who has been recommended for this congregation by the synod bishop.

may be called as a pastor of this congregation.

**\*C9.03. (ELCA 2019)**

Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,

- a. Every minister of Word and Sacrament shall:
  - 6) impart knowledge of this church and its wider ministry through distribution of its communications and publications available channels of effective communication;
- b. Each pastor with a congregational call shall, within the congregation:
  - 4) with the council, administer discipline; and
  - 5) endeavor to increase the support given by the congregation to the work of the ELCA churchwide organization and of the (insert name of synod) Synod of the ELCA; 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.

**\*C9.03. (ELCA 2022)**

Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,

- a. Every minister of Word and Sacrament shall:
  - [...]
  - 8) speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, calling for justice and proclaiming God's love for the world 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.

*Rationale: [This amendment was proposed on the assembly floor during the 2019 Churchwide Assembly; consequently, no rationale was provided prior to the assembly.]*

**\*C9.03. (ELCA 2025)**

Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,

- a. Every minister of Word and Sacrament shall:

. . . .

- 8) speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, proclaiming God's love for the world, 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.

*Rationale: A number of amendments were made by the 2019 Churchwide Assembly to this bylaw and to its parallels throughout the constitutions. In the process, the phrase "proclaiming God's love for the world" was omitted from the list of responsibilities of rostered ministers.*

**\*C9.05. (ELCA 2019)**

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

- a. The call of this 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 synodical bishop, for the following reasons:
- c. In case of alleged physical disability or mental incapacity under paragraph a.4) above, the bishop's committee shall obtain and document competent medical opinion concerning the pastor's condition. When a disability or incapacity is evident to the committee, the bishop of this synod may declare the pastorate vacant. When the pastorate is declared vacant, the Synod Council shall list the pastor on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament ~~as disabled with~~ disability status. Upon removal of the disability and the restoration of the pastor to health, the bishop shall take steps to enable the pastor to resume the ministry, either in the congregation last served or in another appropriate call.

**\*C9.05. (ELCA 2022)**

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

- a. The call of this 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:  
[...]
  - 4) **inability to conduct the pastoral office effectively in view of physical** disability or **mental** incapacity of the pastor;  
[...]
- b. When allegations of **physical** disability or **mental** incapacity of the pastor under paragraph a.4) above, or ineffective conduct of the pastoral office under paragraph a.3) above, have come to the attention of the bishop of this synod,
  - 1) the bishop, **in his or her who has** sole discretion, may investigate such conditions personally together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson, or  
[...]
- c. In case of alleged **physical** disability or **mental** incapacity under paragraph a.4) above, the bishop's committee shall obtain and document competent medical opinion concerning the pastor's condition. When a disability or incapacity is evident to the committee, the bishop of this synod may declare the pastorate vacant. When the pastorate is declared vacant, the Synod Council shall list the pastor on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament with disability status. Upon **removal resumption** of the **disability and the restoration of the pastor to health, 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. (2022)

*Rationale: These changes parallel changes being made elsewhere in the Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA. Language related to disability has been changed to reflect current understandings and to clarify that inability and incapacity to conduct the pastoral office effectively are the standard to be considered. In addition, the words "any of" have been inserted for precision, and references to the synod bishop have been made inclusive.*

**\*C9.06. (ELCA 2025)**

At a time of pastoral vacancy, an interim pastor **shall may** be appointed by the bishop of the synod with the consent of this congregation or the Congregation Council.

*Rationale: It is not always possible for a synod bishop to appoint an interim pastor for every congregation*

**\*C9.08. (ELCA 2019)**

This congregation shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to a former pastor before calling a successor. A pastor shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to this congregation before beginning service in a call to another congregation or employment in another ministry setting ~~related to the~~ Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

**\*C9.12. (ELCA 2022)**

The pastor of this congregation:

- a. shall keep accurate parochial records of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, communicants, members received, members dismissed, or members excluded from this congregation;

*Rationale: The deletion of "parochial" is for consistency of usage.*

**\*C9.13. (ELCA 2022)**

The pastor(s) shall submit a report of ~~his or her~~ ministry to the bishop of the synod at least 90 days prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.

*Rationale: Inclusive language*

**\*C9.14. (ELCA 2019)**

The parochial records of this congregation shall be maintained by the pastor and shall remain the property of ~~the this~~ congregation. The secretary of this congregation shall attest in writing to the bishop of this synod that such records have been placed in his or her hands in good order by a departing pastor before the installation of that pastor in another ~~field of labor or the granting by the synod of retired status to the pastor~~ call or approval of a request for change in roster status.

**\*C9.14. (ELCA 2022)**

The parochial records of this congregation shall be maintained by the pastor and shall remain the property of this congregation. The secretary of this congregation shall attest in writing to the bishop of this synod that such records have been placed in ~~his or her~~ the secretary's hands in good order by a departing pastor before the installation of that pastor in another call or approval of a request for change in roster status.

*Rationale: These changes parallel changes being made elsewhere in the Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA. The deletion of “parochial” is for consistency of usage. The second change is for inclusive language.*

**\*C9.15. (ELCA 2025)**

Under special circumstances, subject to the approval of the synod bishop and the concurrence of this congregation, a minister of Word and Sacrament of a church body with which the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America officially has established a relationship of full communion may serve temporarily as pastor of this congregation under a contract between this congregation and the pastor in a form proposed by the synod bishop and approved by this congregation.

*Rationale: Provision is being changed to “required.” With the increasing use of exchangeability of rostered ministers with full communion partners, it is advisable that all congregations make allowance for that possibility.*

**\*C9.21. (ELCA 2019)**

Authority to call a ~~minister of Word and Service~~ deacon shall be in this congregation by at least a two-thirds vote of voting members present and voting at a meeting legally called for that purpose. Before a call is issued, the officers, or a committee elected by [this congregation][the Congregation Council] to recommend the call, shall seek the advice and help of the bishop of the synod.

**\*C9.22. (ELCA 2025)**

~~Only~~ This congregation may call as a deacon only:

a. a member of the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, or

b. a candidate for the roster of Ministers of Word and Service who has been recommended for this congregation by the synod bishop.

~~may be called as a deacon of this congregation.~~

*Rationale: Editorial reformatting for clarity.*

**\*C9.23. (ELCA 2019)**

Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, every minister of Word and Service shall:

- h. Share knowledge of ~~the ELCA~~ this church and its wider ministry of the gospel and advocate for the work of all expressions of this church; and

**\*C9.23. (ELCA 2022)**

Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, every minister of Word and Service shall:

[...]

- c. Speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, calling for justice and proclaiming God's love for the world, witnessing to the realm of God in the community, the nation, and abroad 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;

*Rationale: [This amendment was proposed on the assembly floor during the 2019 Churchwide Assembly; consequently, no rationale was provided prior to the assembly.]*

**\*C9.23. (ELCA 2025)**

Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, every minister of Word and Service shall:

. . . .

- c. Speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, proclaiming God's love for the world, 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;

*Rationale: Several amendments were made by the 2019 Churchwide Assembly to this bylaw and to its parallels throughout the constitutions. In the process, the phrase "proclaiming God's love for the world" was omitted from the list of responsibilities of rostered ministers. This amendment restores the phrase.*

**\*C9.25. (ELCA 2019)**

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



- a. The call of this congregation, when accepted by a deacon, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment, which shall be terminated only by the deacon's death or, following consultation with the synodical bishop, for the following reasons:
- c. In case of alleged physical disability or mental incapacity under paragraph a.4) above, the bishop's committee shall obtain and document competent medical opinion concerning the deacon's condition. When a disability or incapacity is evident to the committee, the bishop of this synod may declare the position vacant. When the position is declared vacant, the Synod Council shall list the deacon on the roster of Ministers of Word and Service as disabled with disability status. Upon removal of the disability and the restoration of the deacon to health, the bishop shall take steps to enable the deacon to resume the ministry, either in the congregation last served or in another appropriate call. (2019)

**\*C9.25. (ELCA 2022)**

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

- a. The call of this congregation, when accepted by a deacon, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment, which shall be terminated only by the deacon's death or, following consultation with the synod bishop, for any of the following reasons:
  - [...]
  - 4) inability to conduct the office effectively in view of physical disability or mental incapacity of the deacon;
  - [...]
- b. When allegations of physical disability or mental incapacity of the deacon under paragraph a.4) above, or ineffective conduct of the office of minister of Word and Service under paragraph a.3) above, have come to the attention of the bishop of this synod,
  - 1) the bishop, in his or her who has sole discretion, may investigate such conditions personally together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson, or
  - [...]
- c. In case of alleged physical disability or mental incapacity under paragraph a.4) above, the bishop's committee shall obtain and document competent medical opinion concerning the deacon's condition. When a disability or incapacity is evident to the committee, the bishop of this synod may declare the position vacant. When the position is declared vacant, the Synod Council shall list the deacon on the roster of Ministers of Word and Service with disability status. Upon removal resumption of the disability and the restoration of the deacon to health ability to conduct the office

effectively, the bishop shall take steps to enable the deacon to resume the ministry, either in the congregation last served or in another appropriate call.

*Rationale: These changes parallel changes being made elsewhere in the Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA. Language related to disability has been changed to reflect current understandings and to clarify that inability and incapacity to conduct the pastoral office effectively are the standard to be considered. In addition, the words “any of” have been inserted for precision, and references to the synod bishop have been made inclusive.*

**\*C9.26. (ELCA 2019)**

~~The deacon shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to a former congregation before:~~

- ~~a. installation in another field of labor, or~~
- ~~b. the issuance of a certificate of dismissal or transfer.~~

This congregation shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to a former deacon before calling a successor. A deacon shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to this congregation before beginning service in a call to another congregation or employment in another ministry setting.

**\*C9.31. (ELCA 2022)**

The deacon(s) shall submit a report of ~~his or her~~ ministry to the bishop of the synod at least 90 days prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.

*Rationale: Inclusive language*

**CHAPTER 10: CONGREGATION MEETING**

**C10.01. (ELCA 2019)**

~~The [annual][semi-annual][quarterly] meeting of this congregation shall be held at a time specified in the bylaws.~~

This congregation shall have at least one regular meeting per year. The regular meeting(s) of the congregation shall be held at the time(s) specified in the bylaws.

Consistent with the laws of the State of \_\_\_\_\_, the bylaws shall designate one regular meeting per year as the annual meeting of this congregation.

*Rationale: Amended for clarity*

#### **C10.02. (ELCA 2022)**

A special Congregation Meeting may be called by the [senior] pastor, the Congregation Council, or the president<sup>1</sup> of this congregation, and shall be called by the president of this congregation upon the written request of \_\_\_\_ [number][percent] of the voting members. The president of the Congregation Council shall call a special meeting upon request of the synod bishop. The call for each special meeting shall specify the purpose for which it is to be held, and no other business shall be transacted.

[New footnote. Does not apply FLC. Footnote is not in FLC's constitution.]

<sup>1</sup> If the pastor is the president of the congregation, the congregation may consider giving the vice president the authority to call a special meeting.

*Rationale: Because there are congregations where the pastor is president of the congregation, a footnote is being inserted to suggest that the vice president of the congregation might be given authority to call a special Congregation Meeting.*

#### **C10.02. (ELCA 2025)**

A special Congregation Meeting may be called by the [senior] pastor, the Congregation Council, or the president<sup>1</sup> of this congregation, and shall be called by the president of this congregation upon the written request of [number ] \_\_\_\_\_ [percent] of the voting members. The president of the Congregation Council shall call a special meeting upon request of the synod bishop. The call for each special meeting shall specify the purpose for which it is to be held, and no other business shall be transacted.

*Rationale: ELCA's recommendation is to use a fixed percentage of voting members to request a Congregation Meeting, rather than the option of a given number. FLC will continue to have the option of using the number or a percentage of voting members.*

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<sup>1</sup> If the pastor is the president of the congregation, the congregation may consider giving the vice president the authority to call a special meeting.

#### **C10.08. (ELCA 2019)**

This congregation may hold meetings by remote communication, including electronically and by telephone conference, as long as there is an opportunity for simultaneous aural communication. To the extent permitted by state law, notice of all meetings may be provided electronically.

#### **C10.08. (ELCA 2022)**

This congregation may hold meetings by remote communication, including electronically and by telephone conference, as long as there is an opportunity for simultaneous aural communication or its equivalent. To the extent permitted by state law, notice of all meetings may be provided electronically.

*Rationale: This change recognizes that there are other means of providing for simultaneous communication, for those with hearing disabilities, for example.*

#### **C10.09. (ELCA 2022)**

"Ex officio" as used herein means membership with full rights of voice and vote unless otherwise expressly limited. (2022)

*Rationale: There is often confusion surrounding the term "ex officio." The intended meaning is that someone who is a voting member ex officio has both voice and vote because of the office that person holds. The term is often misunderstood, however, to mean that the person cannot vote.*

### **CHAPTER 12: CONGREGATION COUNCIL**

#### **C12.01. (FLC)**

The voting membership of the Congregation Council shall consist of not more than 15 nor fewer than 12 members of this congregation. The pastor(s) shall be an ex officio member(s) of the Congregational Council but without vote. Any voting member of this congregation may be elected, subject only to the limitation on the length of continuous service permitted in that office. A member's place on the Congregation Council shall be declared vacant if the member a) ceases to be a voting member of this congregation or b) is absent from four successive regular meetings of the Congregation Council without cause. Consistent with the laws of the state in which this congregation is incorporated, the congregation may adopt procedures for the removal of a member of the Congregation Council in other circumstances.

#### **C12.01.01. (FLC)**

A member's place on the Congregation Council shall be declared vacant if the member: a) ceases to be a voting member of this congregation or b) is absent from four successive regular meetings of the Congregation Council without prior notice to an officer of this congregation who serves on the Congregation Council. Consistent with the laws of the state in which this congregation is incorporated, this congregation may adopt procedures for the removal of a member of the Congregation Council in other circumstances.

*Rationale: For purposes of clarity regarding absence without cause, this new provision was separated from 12.01. The purpose of this change is to provide a clear definition of what constitutes an absence "with" or "without cause."*

#### **C12.01.02. (FLC)**

In matters where legal age is required, such as purchase, disposition of, or encumbrance of real property, or other legal requirements, the voting member shall also be required to have reached legal age. This shall not preclude election to the council of any voting member.

*Rationale: This is a number change from 12.01.01 to 12.01.02 in order to allow for clarification of "with" and "without cause" in the new 12.01.01.*

#### **C12.02. (ELCA 2019)**

The members of the Congregation Council except the pastor(s) and deacon(s) shall be elected by written ballot to serve for \_\_\_\_\_ years or until their successors are elected. Such members shall be eligible to serve no more than two full terms consecutively. Their terms shall begin at the close of the annual meeting at which they are elected.

or

The members of the Congregation Council except the pastor(s) and deacon(s) shall be elected at a legally called meeting of the this congregation during the month of \_\_\_\_\_. Their term of office shall be for \_\_\_\_\_ years, with the term of office beginning on \_\_\_\_\_ (month and day) and ending on \_\_\_\_\_ (month and day). Newly elected Congregation Council members shall be installed at worship the Sunday prior to the date they assume office at a time appointed by the Congregation Council.

#### **C12.02.01. (FLC)**

Newly-elected Congregation Council members, together with sitting members of the Council, shall normally be installed at the next Sunday worship service after their election.

*Rationale: This amendment seeks to establish a consistent and meaningful practice for installing newly-elected Congregation Council members. By formally including this procedure in the church's constitution, we affirm the importance of leadership transition as a part of our communal life and spiritual practice.*

#### **C12.03. (FLC)**

Should a member's place on the Congregation Council be declared vacant, the Congregation Council Individuals who have served less than ½ of a regular term shall be eligible for nomination and possible election to a full term. may choose to fill the vacated seat or wait until the next annual meeting. The decision shall be based on: a) whether the vacated seat will be open for 6 months or longer and/or b) whether the vacated seat reduces the total number of Congregation Council members to less than the minimum required (C12.01.). If the open seat is to be filled, the Congregation Council shall elect, by a majority vote, a successor until the next annual meeting. Individuals who are elected to fill vacated seats for less than one-half of a regular three-year term shall be eligible for nomination and possible election to a full first term and subsequently a second term.

*Rationale: The enhancement of this section provides clear and consistent guidance for filling vacancies on the Congregation Council. It ensures continuity of leadership, fairness to successors, clarity and transparency, and alignment with mission.*

#### **C12.04. (ELCA 2019)**

The Congregation Council shall have general oversight of the life and activities of this congregation, and in particular its worship life, to the end that everything be done in accordance with the Word of God and the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The duties of the Congregation Council shall include the following:

- h. To emphasize partnership with support of the synod and churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as well as cooperation with other congregations, both Lutheran and non-Lutheran, subject to established policies of the synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

#### C12.05. (ELCA 2019)

The Congregation Council shall be responsible for the financial and property matters of this congregation.

- d. The Congregation Council shall prepare an annual budget for adoption by this congregation, shall supervise the expenditure of funds in accordance therewith following its adoption, and may incur obligations of more than \$ \_\_\_\_\_ in excess of the anticipated receipts only after approval by a Congregation Meeting. The budget shall include this congregation's full indicated share in support of the wider ministry being carried on in partnership collaboration with the synod and churchwide organization.
- e. The Congregation Council shall ascertain that the financial affairs of this congregation are being conducted efficiently, giving particular attention to the prompt payment of all obligations and to the regular forwarding of benevolence mission support monies to the synodical treasurer.

#### C12.05. (ELCA 2022)

The Congregation Council shall be responsible for the financial and property matters of this congregation.

[...]

- e. The Congregation Council shall ascertain that the financial affairs of this congregation are being conducted efficiently, giving particular attention to the prompt payment of all obligations and to the regular forwarding of mission support monies to the synod treasurer.

*Rationale: Because synods have different systems for receipt of mission support monies from congregations, the elimination of the word "treasurer" allows for greater flexibility.*

#### C12.11. (ELCA 2022)

The Congregation Council shall normally meet once a month. Special meetings may be called by the pastor or the president<sup>2</sup>, and shall be called by the president at the request of at least one-half of its members. Notice of each special meeting shall be given to all who are entitled to be present.

[New footnote]

<sup>2</sup> If the pastor is the president of the congregation, the congregation may consider giving the vice president the authority to call a special meeting.

*Rationale: Because there are congregations where the pastor is president of the congregation, a footnote is being inserted to suggest that the vice president of the congregation might be given authority to call a special meeting of the Congregation Council.*

#### **C12.13. (ELCA 2022)**

The Congregation Council and its committees may hold meetings by remote communication, including electronically and by telephone conference, as long as there is an opportunity for simultaneous aural communication or its equivalent. ~~and, to the~~ extent permitted by state law, notice of all meetings may be provided electronically.

*Rationale: This change recognizes that there are other means of providing for simultaneous communication, for those with hearing disabilities, for example.*

### **CHAPTER 13: CONGREGATION COMMITTEES**

#### **C13.02.03. (FLC)**

The pastor shall serve as convener and as an advisor. The first meeting of the Nominating Committee will occur no later than September, annually.

*Rationale: Adding a date to the Nominating Committee allows for timely preparation, consistency, and accountability, and standardizes the process.*

#### **C13.04. (ELCA 2022)**

A Mutual Ministry Committee(s) (in the absence of a mutual ministry committee, the duties shall be fulfilled by the executive committee) shall be appointed jointly by the president [vice president<sup>13</sup>] and the rostered minister. Term of office shall be two years, with three members to be appointed each successive year.

**[Footnote number changed]**

<sup>13</sup> For use if the pastor is president of the congregation under two of the options in C11.02.

*Rationale: Editorial change necessitated by the addition of earlier footnotes.*

#### **C13.04. (FLC)**

A Mutual Ministry Committee(s) (in the absence of a mutual ministry committee, the duties shall be fulfilled by the executive committee) candidates shall be nominated by the rostered minister and approved by the Congregation Council.



*Rationale: This amendment clarifies the process for forming and sustaining a Mutual Ministry Committee. Allowing the rostered minister to nominate members ensures trusted, confidential partners are chosen, while requiring approval by the Congregation Council provides accountability and shared oversight. Including the Executive Committee as a fallback guarantees that essential functions of support, communication, and care for the pastor and staff will always be carried out. This balanced process strengthens relationships and equips the congregation to nurture effective ministry.*

#### **C13.05. (ELCA 2019)**

When a ~~pastoral~~ vacancy occurs in a position for which this congregation calls a rostered minister, a Call Committee of six voting members shall be elected by [this congregation] [the Congregation Council]. Term of office will terminate upon the installation of the newly called ~~pastor~~ rostered minister.

#### **C13.07. (FLC)**

Duties of committees of this congregation shall be specified in the continuing resolutions.

*Rationale: This provision is not new to the ELCA constitution, but is new to FLC's constitution. In 2024, FLC adopted Continuing Resolutions for committees to define their ministries.*

#### **C13.08. (ELCA 2022)**

The [senior] pastor of this congregation shall be ex officio a member of all committees and boards of this congregation. [The president<sup>4</sup> vice president] of this congregation shall be ex officio a member of all committees and boards of this congregation, except the Nominating Committee.]

[New footnote]

<sup>4</sup> If the pastor is the president of the congregation, the congregation may consider selecting the vice president.

*Rationale: Because there are congregations where the pastor is president of the congregation, a footnote is being inserted to suggest that the vice president of the congregation might be granted ex officio membership on committees and boards as described.*

### C13.08.01. (FLC)

As an ex officio member, the pastor(s) of this congregation has a voice, may make a motion, and may vote in committee and board meetings. As an ex officio member, the president of this congregation has a voice, may make a motion, and may vote in committee and board meetings. The presence or absence of either the pastor(s) or the president of this congregation in committee and board meetings does not affect the determination or achievement of a quorum.

*Rationale: The proposed addition clarifies the roles and rights of ex officio members—as referenced in C10.09, specifically the pastor(s) and the congregational president—in committee and board meetings. While ex officio membership often implies participation, there can be ambiguity around whether that includes the right to speak, make motions, or vote. By explicitly stating these rights, this provision ensures consistency, transparency, and shared understanding across all committees and boards. Additionally, affirming that the presence or absence of ex officio members does not impact quorum calculations helps streamline meeting procedures and prevents confusion or delays in decision-making. This clarification protects the congregation’s governance process from unintended disruptions while maintaining the active leadership engagement of the pastor(s) and president.*

## CHAPTER 15: DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS AND ADJUDICATION

### \*C15.01. (ELCA 2025)

Persistent and public denial of the Christian faith, willful or criminal conduct grossly unbecoming a member of the Church of Christ, continual and intentional interference with the ministry of this congregation, or willful and repeated harassment or defamation of member(s) of this congregation is sufficient cause for discipline of a member. Prior to disciplinary action, reconciliation and repentance will be attempted following Matthew 18:15–17, proceeding through these successive steps, as necessary:

- a) private counsel and admonition by the pastor,
- b) censure and admonition by the pastor in the presence of two or three witnesses,
- c) written referral of the matter by the Congregation Council to the vice president of the synod, who will refer it to a consultation panel drawn from the Consultation Committee of the synod, and

d) written referral of the matter by the consultation panel to the Committee on Discipline of the synod.

If, for any reason, the pastor is unable to administer the admonitions required by paragraphs a. and b. hereof, those steps may be performed by another pastor chosen by the Executive Committee of the Congregation Council.

*Rationale: Formatting correction and consistency of constitutional language.*

**\*C15.02. (ELCA 2022)**

The process for discipline of a member of this congregation shall be governed as prescribed by the chapter on discipline in the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. If the counseling, censure, and admonitions pursuant to \*C15.01. do not result in repentance and amendment of life, charges against the accused member(s) that are specific and in writing may be prepared by the Congregation Council, signed, and submitted to the vice president of the synod. The vice president shall select from the synod's Consultation Committee a panel of five members (three laypersons and two rostered ministers of Word and Sacrament). A copy of the written charges shall be provided to the consultation panel and the accused member(s). The consultation panel, after requesting a written reply to the charges from the accused member(s), shall consider the matter and seek a resolution by means of investigation, consultation, mediation, or whatever other means may seem appropriate. The panel's efforts to reach a mutually agreeable resolution shall continue for no more than 45 days after the matter is submitted to it.

*Rationale: Change for inclusion of both rosters.*

**\*C15.11. (ELCA 2019)**

When there is disagreement among factions within this congregation on a substantive issue that cannot be resolved by the parties, members of this congregation shall have access to the synodical bishop for consultation after informing the chair of the Congregation Council of their intent. If the consultation fails to resolve the issue(s), the Consultation Committee of the synod shall consider the matter. If the Consultation Committee of the synod shall fail to resolve the issue(s), the matter shall be referred to the Synod Council, whose decision shall be final.

When there is disagreement between or among factions within this congregation on a substantive issue which cannot be resolved by the parties, members of this

congregation may petition the synod bishop for consultation after informing the president of this congregation 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.

**\*C15.11. (ELCA 2022)**

When there is disagreement between or among factions within this congregation on a substantive issue which cannot be resolved by the parties, members of this congregation may petition the synod bishop for consultation after informing the president [vice president] of this congregation 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.

*Rationale: This change allows congregation members in situations in which the pastor is also president of the congregation to inform the vice president of their intent to petition the synod bishop for consultation.*

**\*C15.11. (ELCA 2025)**

When there is disagreement between or among factions within this congregation on a substantive issue which cannot be resolved by the parties, members of this congregation may petition the synod bishop for consultation after informing the president [vice president] of this congregation 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~~ \*C9.05.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.

*Rationale: It is more logical to cross-reference within the Model Constitution, rather than to make reference to the synod constitution.*

## CHAPTER 16: AMENDMENTS

### \*C16.02. (2019)

An amendment to this constitution, proposed under \*C16.01., shall:

- a. be approved at ~~a any~~ legally called ~~Congregation Meeting according to this constitution meeting of this congregation~~ by a majority vote of those voting members present and voting;
- b. be ratified without change at the next ~~annual meeting regular meeting of this congregation held pursuant to C10.01.~~ by a two-thirds vote of those voting members present and voting; ~~and~~
- c. have the effective date included in the resolution<sup>2</sup> and noted in the constitution.

### \*C16.02. (ELCA 2022)

An amendment to this constitution, proposed under \*C16.01., shall:

- a. be approved at any legally called meeting of this congregation by a majority vote of those voting members present and voting; ~~and~~
- b. be ratified without change at the next regular meeting of this congregation ~~held pursuant to C10.01.~~ by a two-thirds vote of those voting members present and voting; ~~and~~.
- c. ~~have the effective date included in the resolution<sup>2</sup> and noted in the constitution.~~

[Footnote also deleted]

~~<sup>2</sup> Such an effective date must be stated in relation to the requirements of \*C16.03. to allow time for the synod's review of the amendment.~~

Rationale: "Regular meeting" has already been defined elsewhere in the Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA. In addition, C10.01 is not a required provision, so it is not advisable to make reference in a required provision to a non-required provision.

### \*C16.02. (ELCA 2025)

An amendment to this constitution, proposed under \*C16.01., shall:

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<sup>2</sup> Such an effective date must be stated in relation to the requirements of \*C16.03. to allow time for ~~the synodical's~~ review of the amendment.

- a. be approved at any legally called meeting of this congregation by a majority vote of those voting members present and voting; and
- b. be ratified ~~without change~~ unchanged at the next regular meeting of this congregation by a two-thirds vote of those voting members present and voting.

*Rationale: Consistency of constitutional language.*

**\*C16.04. (ELCA 2022)**

This constitution may be amended to bring any section into conformity with a section or sections, either required or not required, of the Model Constitution for Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as most recently amended by the Churchwide Assembly. Such amendments may be approved by a majority vote of those voting members present and voting at any legally called meeting of this congregation without presentation at a prior meeting of this congregation, provided that the Congregation Council has submitted by mail or electronic means, as permitted by state law, notice to this congregation of such an amendment or amendments, together with the council's recommendations, at least 30 days prior to the meeting. Upon the request of at least two (2) voting members of this congregation, the Congregation Council shall submit such notice. Following the adoption of an amendment, the secretary of this congregation shall submit a copy thereof to the synod. Such provisions shall become effective immediately following the congregation's a vote of approval.

*Rationale: Change for precision. This has often been incorrectly interpreted to mean that the synod must vote to approve amendments that are designed to bring the congregation's constitution into alignment with the Model Constitution. In fact, amendments to bring any section or sections, either required or not required, into conformity with the Model Constitution go into effect immediately upon the congregation's vote to amend.*

**CHAPTER 17: BYLAWS**

**\*C17.04. (2019)**

~~Approved changes to the~~ Adopted or amended bylaws shall be sent by the secretary of this congregation to the synod.

**CHAPTER 18: CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS**

**\*C18.03. (ELCA 2019)**

Adopted or amended continuing resolutions shall be sent by the secretary of this congregation to the synod.

## CHAPTER 20: PARISH AUTHORIZATION

[\* Required provisions when congregation is part of a parish. This chapter does not apply to FLC.]

### **\*C20.01. (ELCA 2019)**

This congregation may unite ~~in partnership~~ with one or more other congregations recognized by the synod named in \*C6.01. to form a parish. Except as provided in \*C20.02. and \*C20.03., a written agreement, developed in consultation with the synod and approved by the voting members of each congregation participating in the parish, shall specify the powers and responsibilities that have been delegated to the Parish Council. The Parish Agreement shall identify which congregation of the parish issues calls on behalf of the member congregations or shall establish a process for identifying which congregation issues calls on behalf of the member congregations.

### **\*C20.02. (ELCA 2022)**

One congregation of a parish shall issue a call on behalf of the member congregations to a minister of Word and Sacrament or a candidate for the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament who has been recommended by the synod bishop to serve the congregations of the parish. Such a call shall be approved prior to issuance by a two-thirds vote at a congregational meeting of each congregation forming the parish. If any congregation of the parish should fail to approve the call, the other congregations of the parish shall have the right to terminate the parish agreement.

*Rationale: Editorial change.*

### **\*C20.03. (ELCA 2022)**

One congregation of a parish may issue a call on behalf of the member congregations to a minister of Word and Service or a candidate for the roster of Ministers of Word and Service who has been recommended by the synod bishop to serve the congregations of the parish. Such a call shall be approved prior to issuance by a two-thirds vote at a congregational meeting of each congregation forming the parish. If any congregation of the parish should fail to approve the call, the other congregations of the parish shall have the right to terminate the parish agreement.

*Rationale: Editorial change.*

**\*C20.04. (ELCA 2025).**

Any one of the congregations of the parish may terminate their relationship with the pastor as provided in ~~†S14.18~~ ~~\*C9.05.d. of the synod constitution of the synod named in \*C6.01.~~ In such case, the other congregation(s) of the same parish shall have the right to terminate the parish agreement.

*Rationale: It is more logical to cross-reference within the Model Constitution, rather than to make reference to the synod constitution.*

**\*C20.05. (ELCA 2025)**

<sup>3</sup>Any one of the congregations of the parish may terminate their relationship with a minister of Word and Service as provided in ~~†S14.43~~ ~~\*C9.25.d. of the synod constitution of the synod named in \*C6.01.~~ In such case, the other congregation(s) of the same parish shall have the right to terminate the parish agreement.

*Rationale: It is more logical to cross-reference within the Model Constitution, rather than to make reference to the synod constitution.*