CONSTITUTION, BYLAWS, AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS

of the Nebraska Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America®

2026

as adopted by the Constituting Convention
Nebraska Synod Assembly, ELCA
(June 1-3, 1987)
and
as amended by subsequent
Churchwide Assemblies of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
and Nebraska Synod Assemblies
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CONSTITUTION, BYLAWS
AND
CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS
OF THE
NEBRASKA SYNOD
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
IN AMERICA

CODIFICATION EXPLANATION

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

The three types of provisions are identified by the following devices:

a. All constitutional and bylaw material are printed in regular face type.
b. All continuing resolutions are printed in italic type.
c. A numerical codification indicates general subject, constitutional provisions, bylaw provisions and continuing resolutions.

Major sections are designated as chapters. The chapters are numbered 1 through 20. The chapter designation becomes the first number in the codification sequence and is followed by a period. Thus, provisions in "Chapter 7. Synod Assembly" are preceded by "7."

General subjects are normally titled and designated by a number ending in zero. Thus, a subdivision of Chapter 7 that contains provisions regarding the Synod Assembly is codified and titled "S7.40. Committees of the Synod Assembly." When subjects that are bylaw provisions only are titled, the same principles would apply within the third number sequence, e.g. , S7.41.10. Minutes Committee.

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 and its committees is codified S7.41.

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 Minutes Committee is codified S7.41.11.

Continuing resolutions are also codified with three sets of numbers except that the third set is preceded by a capital letter. Thus, a continuing resolution might be numbered S7. to designate the chapter, S7.22 to designate the subject matter within the chapter, and the third set might be numbered A87 in the codification S7.22.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.

Provisions in Constitutions for Synods are prefaced with "S" for Synod.

CONSTITUTION, BYLAWS AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS
OF THE NEBRASKA SYNOD
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

CHAPTER 1.
NAME AND INCORPORATION

†S1.01. The name of this synod, as determined by the Churchwide Assembly, shall be Nebraska Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

†S1.02. For the purposes of this constitution and the accompanying bylaws, the Nebraska Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is hereafter designated as "this synod" or "the synod."

†S1.11. This synod will be incorporated. Amendments to the articles of incorporation of this synod shall be submitted to the Church Council for ratification before filing.

CHAPTER 2.
STATUS

†S2.01. This synod possesses the powers conferred upon it, and accepts the duties and responsibilities assigned to it, in the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, which are recognized as having governing force in the life of this synod.

†S2.02. The name Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA or “this church”) as used herein refers in general references to this whole church, including its three expressions – congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization. The name Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is also the name of the corporation of the churchwide organization to which specific references may be made herein.

†S2.03. No provision of this constitution shall be inconsistent with the constitution and bylaws of this church.

CHAPTER 3.
TERRITORY

†S3.01. The territory of this synod, as determined by the Churchwide Assembly, shall be the state of Nebraska.

†S3.02. "Determined by the Churchwide Assembly", as stipulated by †S3.01., is understood to include the reported changes in synod relationship made by any congregation in a border area agreed under ELCA bylaws 10.01.01 and 10.01.03.

CHAPTER 4.
CONFESSION OF FAITH

†S4.01. This synod confesses the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

†S4.02. This synod confesses Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and the Gospel as the power of God for the salvation of all who believe.

a. Jesus Christ is the Word of God incarnate, through whom everything was made and through whose life, death, and resurrection God fashions a new creation.

b. The proclamation of God's message to us as both Law and Gospel is the Word of God revealing judgment and mercy through word and deed, beginning with the Word in creation, continuing in the history of Israel, and centering in all its fullness in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

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

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

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

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

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

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

CHAPTER 5.
NATURE OF THE CHURCH

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

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

†S5.03. The Church exists both as an inclusive fellowship and as local congregations gathered for worship and Christian service. Congregations find their fulfillment in the universal community of the church, and the universal Church exists in and through congregations. This church, therefore, derives its character and powers both from the sanction and representation of its congregations and from its inherent nature as

an expression of the broader fellowship of the faithful. In length, it acknowledges itself to be in the historic continuity of the communion of saints; in breadth, it expresses the fellowship of believers and congregations in our day.

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

CHAPTER 6.
STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

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

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

a. Proclaim God's saving gospel of justification by grace for Christ's sake through faith alone, according to the apostolic witness in the Holy Scripture, preserving and transmitting the Gospel faithfully to future generations.

b. Carry out Christ's Great Commission by reaching out to all people to bring them to faith in Christ and by doing all ministry with a global awareness consistent with the understanding of God as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier of all.

c. Serve in response to God's love to meet human needs, caring for the sick and the aged, advocating dignity, 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 partnership with other synods in the region;

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

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

d. supporting relationships with and providing supportive funding on behalf of colleges, universities, and campus ministries;

e. maintaining relationships with and providing supportive funding on behalf of seminaries and continuing education centers;

f. fostering supporting relationships with camps and other outdoor ministries;

g. fostering supporting relationships with preschools, elementary schools, and secondary schools operated by congregations of the synod;

h. fostering relationships with ecumenical and global companions;

i. cooperating with other synods and the churchwide organization in creating, using, and supporting regions to carry out those functions of the synod which can best be done cooperatively with other synods and the churchwide organization.

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

a. encouraging financial support for the work of this church by individuals and congregations;

b. participating in churchwide programs;

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

d. providing ecumenical guidance and encouragement.

†S6.04. Except as otherwise provided in this constitution and bylaws, the Synod Council shall establish processes that will ensure that at least 60 percent of the members of the

synod assemblies, councils, committees, boards, and other organizational units shall be laypersons; and that, 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.

†S6.04.02. It is the goal of this synod that at least 10 percent of the voting members of the Synod Assembly, Synod Council, committees, and organizational units of this synod be members of historically underrepresented groups, in addition to the 10 percent representation of persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English in †S6.04. The Synod Council shall establish a plan for implementing this goal.

†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 in the Articles of Incorporation, this constitution and bylaws, the assembly's own resolutions, and the constitutions and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

S7.02. This Synod Assembly shall:

a. Review the work of the synod officers and Synod Council and for this purpose require and receive written reports and act on business proposed.

b. Review the work of the Synod committees and organizational units created by the synod and for this purpose require and receive written reports through the Synod Council and act on business proposed.

c. Receive and consider proposals from the Synod Council prepared by the committees and organizations.

d. Establish synodwide policies.

e. Adopt the budget for this synod.

f. Elect officers and other persons as provided in the constitution or bylaws.

g. Have the sole authority to amend the synod constitution and bylaws.

h. Fulfill other functions as required by the synod constitution and bylaws.

i. Conduct such other business as necessary to further the purposes and functions of this synod.

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

S7.11.01. The time and place of the Synod Assembly shall be determined by the Synod Council. The time and place of the next regular assembly shall be announced at least six months prior to the assembly to each congregation and to all whose names appear on the roster of this synod.

S7.11.03. Physical arrangements for synod assemblies shall be the responsibility of the Synod Assembly Planning Committee.

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. No more than fifty nor less than ten days in advance, the secretary shall give additional public notice of the time and place of each regular assembly.

S7.13.02. In the event that a special meeting of the Synod Assembly is called, notice shall be given no more than fifty days nor less than ten days in advance to all members of the Synod Assembly as specified in S7.24.

S7.13.03. At least twenty days prior to a Synod Assembly the secretary shall prepare preassembly reports and make them available to each congregation and all assembly voting members.

S.7.14. One-third of the members of the Synod Assembly shall constitute a quorum for convening the assembly.

S7.14.01. A quorum for the conduct of business of a session of the Synod Assembly is a majority of the number of members who have been registered as attending.

†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. Lay voting members shall be elected by each congregation or its council as follows: A minimum of one lay member elected from each congregation with fewer than 175 baptized members and a minimum of two lay members elected from each congregation with 175 or more baptized members, typically one of whom shall be a man and one of whom shall be a woman. 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.

†S7.21.02. 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 or its council may elect new members who shall continue to serve until the next regular Synod Assembly.

S7.22. In addition to those individuals listed in †S7.21, the following individuals shall serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, consistent with the provisions of †S7.21c and provided they are registered in attendance at the Synod Assembly:

a. Retired ministers of Word and Sacrament.

b. Retired ministers of Word and Service.

c. Ministers of Word and Sacrament and ministers of Word and Service who are on leave from call or granted disability status, provided that they are currently rostered in this synod.

d. Parish ministry associates who have been authorized by the Bishop of the Nebraska Synod to serve a congregation in lieu of a rostered minister.

e. One youth or young adult from each mission cluster unit in this synod, consistent with the provisions of †S6.04.01.

†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.

S7.23.01. The privilege of voice but not vote in the Synod Assembly shall be accorded to the following in connection with their reports: the chairpersons of the synodical committees, representatives of institutions and agencies related to or officially recognized by the synod, and the presidents of official synodical organizations.

S7.24. 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 rosters of the 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 or a confirmed member of a synod-authorized worshipping committee of this synod.

S7.26. This synod may establish processes through the Synod Council that permit persons currently serving as synod-authorized ministers and/or lay representatives of authorized worshiping communities and/or outreach ministries 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.

S7.27. This synod may establish processes through the Synod Council to grant a minister of Word and Sacrament from a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by the Churchwide Assembly the privilege for both voice and vote in the Synod Assembly during the period of that minister's service in a congregation of this church.

S7.28. Duly elected voting members of the Synod Council who are not otherwise voting members of the Synod Assembly under †S7.21. shall be granted the privilege of both voice and vote as members of the Synod Assembly.

S7.29. Ministers on the roster of this Synod on leave from call in the status of continuing disability or on leave from call in the status of interim minister in a congregation or congregations of this synod, registered in attendance at the Synod Assembly, shall serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly consistent with the representation requirements of †S7.21c.

†S7.31. Proxy and absentee voting shall not be permitted in the transaction of any business of the Synod Assembly.

S7.32. Robert's Rules of Order, latest edition, shall govern parliamentary procedure of the Synod Assembly, 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.

S7.40. Committees of the Synod Assembly

S7.41. The Synod Assembly shall have a Minutes Committee, and a Resolutions, Reference, and Counsel Committee. A description of these committees and their method of appointment shall be included in the bylaws. The Synod Assembly may authorize such other committees as it deems necessary. All Synod Assembly Committees shall meet the requirements of S6.04.

S7.41.10. Minutes Committee

S7.41.11. A Minutes Committee of four members shall be appointed by the Synod Council.

S7.41.12. Each day's minutes of the Assembly shall be submitted daily by the secretary to the Minutes Committee for approval. Approval of the final day's minutes shall be the responsibility of the bishop and the secretary of the synod. Two copies of the printed minutes of each meeting of the Assembly are then certified by the bishop and the secretary as the official protocol of this session. These minutes are to be submitted for final approval at the next regular Synod Council meeting and then deposited in the archives.

S7.41.20. Reference and Counsel Committee

S7.41.21. The Reference and Counsel Committee shall be appointed by the Synod Council with representation from mission cluster units in such a way as to assure geographical participation from across the synod.

S7.41.22. Resolutions are to be submitted to the Synod Council Secretary 90 days prior to the Synod Assembly. The Reference and Counsel Committee shall review and make recommendations to the Synod Council regarding each resolution. After review by the Synod Council, these resolutions shall be published in the preassembly report with the Synod Council opinions. Late resolutions, submitted after the 90-day deadline, are to be submitted to the Reference and Counsel Committee before a deadline established by the Synod Assembly. Late resolutions will be brought to the Assembly and require a two-third vote to be considered on the floor.

S7.41.23. Any voting member, congregations, mission cluster units, the Synod Council, and Synod committees may submit resolutions as stated in S7.41.22 before the

preassembly deadline. Only voting members and the Synod Council may submit resolutions after the preassembly deadline.

S7.41.25. The Committee shall review all resolutions not published in the preassembly report and make its recommendations to the assembly. In submitting its report, the Committee may recommend that the resolution be adopted or not adopted, that the Committee was unable to arrive at a recommendation or prepare a substitute resolution.

S7.41.26. Other duties of the Committee shall be to:

a. Grant or deny permission to distribute printed matter not issued through the office of the secretary;

b. Give such assistance to the bishop as desired in the course of the meeting, and

c. Carry out other responsibilities as may be assigned by the bishop, Synod Assembly or the Synod Council.

CHAPTER 8
OFFICERS

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

S8.10. Bishop

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

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

a. Preach, teach, and administer the sacraments in accord with the Confession of Faith of this church.

b. Have primary responsibility for the ministry of Word and Sacrament in this synod and its congregations, providing pastoral care and leadership for this synod, its congregations, ministers of Word and Sacrament, and its ministers of Word and Service.

c. Exercise solely this church's power to ordain (or provide for the ordination by another synodical bishop of) approved candidates who have received and accepted a properly issued, duly attested letter of call for the office of ministry of Word and Sacrament (and as provided in the bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America).

d. Ordain (or provide for the ordination of) approved candidates who have received and accepted a properly issued, duly attested letter of call for service as ministers of Word and Service.

e. Attest letters of call for persons called to serve congregations in the synod, letters of call for persons called by the Synod Council, and letters of call for persons on the rosters of this synod called by the Church Council.

f. Install (or provide for the installation of) rostered ministers whose calls the bishop has attested.

g. Exercise leadership in the mission of this church and in so doing:
   1) Interpret and advocate the mission and theology of the whole church;
   2) Lead in fostering support for and commitment to the mission of this church within this synod;
   3) Coordinate the use of the resources available to this synod as it seeks to promote the health of this church's life and witness in the areas served by this synod;
   4) Submit a report to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly concerning the synod's life and work; and
   5) Advise and counsel this synod's related institutions and organizations.

h. Practice leadership in strengthening the unity of the Church and in so doing:
   1) Exercise oversight of the preaching, teaching, and administration of the sacraments within this synod in accord with the Confession of Faith of this church;
   2) Be responsible for administering the constitutionally established processes for the resolution of controversies and for the discipline of ministers and congregations of this synod;
   3) Be the chief ecumenical officer of this synod;
   4) Be a member of the Conference of Bishops and consult regularly with other synod bishops;
   5) Foster awareness of other churches throughout the Lutheran world communion and, where appropriate, engage in contact with leaders of those churches;
   6) Cultivate communion in faith and mission with appropriate Christian judicatory leaders functioning within the territory of this synod; and
   7) Be *ex officio* a member of the Churchwide Assembly.

i. Oversee and administer the work of this synod and in so doing:
   1) Serve as the president of the synod corporation and be the chief executive and administrative officer of this synod, who is authorized and empowered, in the name of this synod, to sign deeds or other instruments and to affix the seal of this synod;
   2) Preside at all meetings of the Synod Assembly and provide for the preparation of the agenda for the Synod Assembly, Synod Council, and the council's Executive Committee;
   3) Ensure that the constitution and bylaws of the synod and of the churchwide organization are duly observed within this synod, and that the actions of the synod in conformity therewith are carried into effect;
   4) 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 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;
    c) the entrance of the names of such persons for whom proper certificates of transfer have been received;
11) Provide for preparation and maintenance of a roster of the congregations of this synod and names of the laypersons who have been elected to represent them; and
12) Appoint a statistician of the synod, who shall secure the reports of the congregations and make the reports available to the secretary of this church for collation, analysis, and distribution of the statistical summaries to this synod and the other synods of this church.

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

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

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

†S8.16. Conflicts of Interest

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

a. Whenever a 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 than 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 or a confirmed member of a synod-authorized worshipping committee 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:

a. Chair the Synod Council meetings.

b. Submit written reports to the Synod Council.

c. Submit written reports to the Synod Assembly.

S8.30. Secretary

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

†S8.32. The secretary shall:

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

b. Be authorized and empowered, in the name of this synod, to attest all instruments which require the same, and which are signed and sealed by the bishop.

c. In consultation with the bishop, classify and arrange all important papers and documents and deposit them in the archives of this synod.

d. Submit to the secretary of this church at least nine months before each regular Churchwide Assembly a certified list of the voting members elected by the Synod Assembly.

S8.40. Treasurer

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

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

d. Management of the monies and accounts of this synod, its deeds, mortgages, contracts, evidences of claims and revenues, and trust funds, holding the same at all times subject to the order of this synod.

e. Investment of funds upon the authorization of the Synod Council.

f. Receipt and acknowledgment of offerings, contributions, and bequests made to this synod, collecting interest and income from its invested funds, and paying regular appropriations and orders on the several accounts as approved and directed by the Synod Council. The treasurer shall transmit each month to the treasurer of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America the funds received by this synod for the general work of this church as well as any funds to support restricted programs of this church.

g. Maintenance of a regular account with each congregation of this synod and informing the congregation, at least quarterly, of the status of this account.

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

i. Obtaining a fidelity bond in the amount determined by the Synod Council for persons handling synod funds, which bond shall be in the custody of the secretary. The premium for the bond shall be paid by this synod. Fidelity coverage provided by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be deemed a fulfillment of this requirement.

S8.50. General Provisions

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

a. The bishop of this synod shall be elected to a term of six years and may be reelected.

b. The vice president and secretary of this synod shall be elected to a term of four years and may be reelected. The officer shall serve until a successor takes office.

c. The treasurer of this synod shall be elected or appointed to a term of four years and may be re-elected or reappointed. The treasurer shall serve until a successor takes office.

S8.51.01. All officers shall serve until their successors assume office.

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

†S8.53. Each officer shall be a voting member in a congregation of this synod, except that the bishop need not be a member of a congregation or a confirmed member of a synod-authorized worshipping committee 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 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 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.

a. Proceedings for the recall or dismissal of a synod bishop shall be instituted by written petition by:

1) the Synod Council on an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of its elected members present and voting;
2) the Synod Assembly on an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of its members present and voting;
3) at least 10 synod bishops; or
4) the presiding bishop of this church.

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

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

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

e. In the case of alleged physical or mental incapacity of an officer of the synod, the procedures outlined in †S8.56. shall be followed, and such officer shall comply with the decision of the Synod Council. If such officer fails or refuses to comply, the Synod Council may proceed to petition for recall or dismissal as follows:
1) the Synod Council will submit a written report of their findings and the basis of their decision to the Committee on Appeals.
2) the Committee on Appeals, 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.
NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

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

S9.02. In all elections by the Synod Assembly, other than for the bishop, a majority of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election.

S9.02.01. To provide for geographical representation in the nomination processes for Synod Council and Churchwide Assembly, mission cluster units will provide nominees to the Nominating Committee. If approved by the Nominating Committee, the nominees shall be forwarded to the Synod Council for consideration and potential advancement to the Synod Assembly.

S9.03. There shall be a Nominating Committee consisting of representatives of mission cluster units with consideration given to geographical representation and gender balance, alternating between clergy and lay persons. The members of the committee shall be elected by the Synod Council. Terms shall be for three years with one-third being elected annually. No person shall be eligible to serve more than two consecutive terms. The Synod Council shall appoint one of its members to serve on the committee. Nominations from the floor shall also be permitted for which nominations are made by the Nominating Committee. Each floor nomination shall be presented as an additional nominee within a specific category named by the Nominating Committee and shall therefore meet the same criteria as other nominees in that category. Biographical data shall be provided for each nominee. Each nominee should have given prior consent to serve if elected.

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 who receive the greatest number of legal votes (including ties in the final qualifying position) 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 who receive the greatest number of legal votes (including ties in the final qualifying position) on the third ballot, and 60 percent of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. On subsequent ballots a majority of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. These ballots shall be limited to the two persons who receive the greatest number of legal votes (including ties in the final qualifying position) on the previous ballot.

S9.04.01. In the year when the bishop is to be elected, all mission cluster unit meetings shall be scheduled at least ninety days prior to the Synod Assembly and shall be held on the same day. The voting members of the mission cluster unit meeting shall be those within the mission cluster unit who have been elected as members of the Synod Assembly.

S9.04.02. Two ballots shall be cast at each mission cluster unit meeting prior to the election of a synodical bishop. The first ballot shall be a nominating ballot. Following the report of the results of the mission cluster unit nominating ballot, a second ballot shall be cast during the meeting. The names of the five persons receiving the greatest number of votes (plus ties) on the second ballot shall be submitted to the Nebraska Synod vice president on the first working day following the mission cluster unit meeting.

S9.04.03. Each of the persons nominated shall be contacted by the synod vice president to determine willingness to be a candidate for bishop. All persons responding affirmatively shall submit background information using a uniform format to the synod office at least sixty days prior to the Synod Assembly. The background information shall be distributed to all voting members at least thirty days prior to the Synod Assembly.

S9.04.04. The candidates for bishop will be invited to participate in an event organized by the Synod in conjunction with the Synod Assembly.

S9.05. The Nominating Committee shall nominate at least one person for vice-president; additional nominations may be made from the floor.

S9.06. The Synod Council shall nominate at least one person for secretary; additional nominations may be made from the floor.

S9.07. If the treasurer is elected, the Synod Council shall nominate at least one person for treasurer; additional nominations may be made from the floor.

S9.08. In all elections of officers, except for the bishop, the names of the persons receiving the highest number of legal votes, but not elected by a majority of the legal votes cast on a preceding ballot, shall be entered on the next ballot to the number of two for each vacancy unfilled. On any ballot when only two names appear, a majority of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election.

S9.09. The result of each ballot in every election shall be announced in detail to the assembly.

†S9.10. When notified by the secretary of this church, on behalf of the Nominating Committee of the Churchwide Assembly, the Synod Assembly shall nominate two persons in the specified categories for possible election by the Churchwide Assembly to the Church Council.

S9.11. Synod elected members of governing boards of agencies and institutions shall be elected by the Synod Council.

a. Nominations may be made by the Nominating Committee of the Synod, by agencies and institutions, and by members of the Synod Council.

b. Concern for expertise and attention to goals of inclusiveness shall be a part of the election process.

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

S9.13. No person elected by the synod as a member of the governing board of an agency or institution, or a committee of the synod shall be eligible to serve more than two consecutive terms unless otherwise specified in the bylaws.

S9.14. Voting members to the Churchwide Assembly shall be elected by the Synod Assembly. The Synod Assembly shall elect representatives from the mission cluster units on a rotating basis according to S9.02.01. There shall be two nominees for each position. The bishop and synod vice-president will be voting members ex-officio. The remainder of the voting members shall be elected by the Synod Assembly from an at-large slate of candidates consistent with S6.04.

CHAPTER 10
SYNOD COUNCIL

†S10.01. The Synod Council, consisting of the four officers of the synod~~,~~ and 10 to 24 other members, at least one young adult and with a goal of at least one youth, shall be elected by the Synod Assembly.

a. Each person elected to the Synod Council shall be a voting member of a congregation or a confirmed member of a synod-authorized worshipping committee of this synod, with the exception of ministers on a roster of this synod who reside outside the territory of this synod. The process for election and the term of office when not otherwise provided shall be specified in the bylaws. A member of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, unless otherwise elected as a voting member of the Synod Council, may serve as an advisory member of the Synod Council with voice but not vote.

b. The term of office of members of the Synod Council, with the exception of the officers and the youth member, shall be six years.

S10.01.09. Synod Council members are not eligible for consecutive reelection.

S10.01.10. Other members of the Synod Council shall be representatives from the mission cluster units on a rotating basis according to S9.02.01. and three members-at-large. The three members-at-large are to be selected to provide representation from those under-represented because of culture and/or gender. Two of the at-large members are to be laypersons. The Nominating Committee shall provide two nominees for each at-large position.

S10.01.11. The term of office of the youth member of the Synod Council shall be two years. This person shall be fourteen to seventeen years of age or entering grades ten to twelve at the time of their election. The Nominating Committee shall provide two nominees for the youth position.

†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 that 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 budgets to the regular meetings of the Synod Assembly.

c. Carry out the resolutions of the Synod Assembly.

d. Provide for an annual review of the roster of ministers of Word and Sacrament and the roster of ministers of Word and Service, receive and act upon appropriate recommendations regarding those persons whose status is subject to reconsideration and action under the constitution and bylaws of the ELCA, and make a report to the Synod Assembly of the Synod Council's actions in this regard.

e. Issue letters of call to rostered ministers as authorized by Chapter 7 of the constitution and bylaws of the ELCA.

f. Fill vacancies until the next regular meeting of the Synod Assembly at which regular elections are scheduled to occur, except as may otherwise be provided in the constitution or bylaws of this synod, and determine the fact of the incapacity of an officer of this synod.

g. Report its actions to the regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.

h. Perform such other functions as are set forth in the bylaws of this synod, or as may be delegated to it by the Synod Assembly.

i. Authorize staff positions.

S10.03.A89. *The Synod Council shall fill vacancies in the synod's delegation to Churchwide Assemblies, selecting a replacement in the same category as the vacancy occurred and in the order of votes received at 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. Elected members of the Synod Council shall not receive compensation solely for their service as council members.

S10.06. No person related to a synod staff member shall be eligible for nomination to or membership on the Synod Council. For this purpose, a related individual is one who, with respect to the synod employee, 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).

S10.07. If a member of the Synod Council ceases to meet the requirements of the position to which they were elected, the office filled by such member shall at once become vacant.

S10.08. 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.

S10.07.10. The Synod Council shall relate to the agencies and institutions of the synod. It shall work with the appropriate Churchwide office in the process by which an agency or institution on the territory of the synod is granted affiliation with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or the affiliation is removed.

S10.07.11. The Budget and Finance Committee shall review budgetary requests for capital funds and for operating expenses from social ministry agencies and institutions for recommendation to the Synod Council.

S10.07.12. The Synod Council shall monitor the relationship to the synod of its recognized or affiliated social ministry agencies and institutions in accordance with service standards and procedures adopted by this church.

S10.07.14. The Synod Council shall meet at least three times annually.

S10.09. *Robert's Rules of Order*, latest edition, shall govern parliamentary procedure of all meetings of the Synod Council.

†S10.09.01. To the extent permitted by state law, meetings of the Synod Council and its committees may be held through electronic means such as the Internet or by telephone, 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.

S10.10. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

S10.11. The Synod Council shall have an Executive Committee which shall be composed of the synod officers and three members of the Council elected by the Synod Council annually. The Executive Committee shall perform those functions of the Synod

Council assigned to it by the Synod Council. The Executive Committee provides leadership for the Synod and may conduct business of the Synod in lieu of the Synod Council between regularly scheduled Council meetings. Such business shall be conducted in accordance with established policies of the Synod. The Committee shall make the Council aware of all such business and decisions made by the Committee within fifteen business days.

S10.11.01. Election of the Synod Council Executive Committee shall be by ballot. The three people with the highest number of votes elected shall be declared members of the Executive Committee. A run-off ballot will be cast in case of any ties.

CHAPTER 11
COMMITTEES AND 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 this synod may from time to time determine. The duties and functions of such committees, or any other organizational units created by this synod, and the composition and organizational structure of such units, shall be as set forth in this constitution or in the bylaws or continuing resolutions, and shall be subject to any applicable provisions or requirements of the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

S11.01.01. The bishop with the approval of the Synod Council shall have the authority to establish special synodical committees and task forces.

S11.01.02. The Synod Council shall annually elect the chairpersons of the committees and task forces. The committees and task forces shall elect the secretaries.

†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 laypersons, who shall each be elected by the Synod Assembly for a term of six years without consecutive reelection. The functions of the Consultation Committee are set forth in Chapter 20 of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* and in Chapter 17 of this constitution. The size of the Consultation Committee, in accord with this provision, shall be defined in this synod's bylaws.

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

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 terms of committee members shall be staggered so that the terms of four committee members (two clergy and two lay) expire every two years.

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

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. This committee shall give encouragement by expressing concern for the spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being of the bishop and professional staff of the synod.

S11.04.02. This committee shall be composed of the members of the Executive Committee of the Synod Council. The chairperson shall be the vice-president of the synod.

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

S11.06. The synodical bylaws for the Consultation Committee and Discipline Committee shall automatically be amended to conform to amendments in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America constitution and bylaws.

S11.07. The bishop may from time to time designate a representative to synod committees and task forces who shall have voice and vote.

†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 ministers on the rosters of this synod who reside outside the territory of this synod, each member of a committee of this synod, or any other organizational unit created by this synod, shall be a voting member of a congregation or a confirmed member of a synod-authorized worshipping committee of this synod.

S11.20.10. SYNOD STANDING COMMITTEES

S11.23.10. CANDIDACY COMMITTEE

S11.23.11. This committee shall seek to fulfill the mission of the synod by enlisting prospective candidates for church occupations, providing guidance and support for them, reviewing their credentials, and evaluating their qualifications for inclusion on the roster of Word and Sacrament and Word and Service ministers of the church. This committee shall:

a. Register, supervise, and approve candidates for church occupations.

b. Endorse the synod's ministerial candidates.

c. Disburse, through grants or loans, the funds appropriated by the synod for the assistance of candidates preparing for church occupations.

d. Examine the qualifications of candidates for rostered ministry or for reception from other Lutheran Church bodies and in accordance with provisions established by the ELCA, shall have responsibility to approve such applications.

S11.23.12. This committee shall be composed of no more than sixteen members elected to terms of four years by the Synod Council for their expertise in this area. As nearly as possible, one-fourth of the committee shall be elected annually. No person shall be eligible to serve more than two consecutive terms.

S11.23.13. This committee shall relate to the appropriate unit or office of the Churchwide organization.

S11.30.10. OTHER ORGANIZATIONAL UNITS

S11.31.11. Synod organizations such as women's, men's or youth, shall:

a. Provide a liaison between their organization and the Synod Council.

b. Submit written reports to the Synod Council and Synod Assembly annually.

S11.40.10. CABINET OF DEANS

S11.41.11. The Cabinet of Deans shall consist of the clergy deans of the mission cluster units and the synod bishop.

S11.41.12. The synod bishop shall convene and chair this cabinet.

S11.41.13. The purpose of the Cabinet of Deans shall be to address synod wide pastoral care concerns and to help coordinate mission efforts among mission cluster units, synod committees and congregations.

S11.41.14. This cabinet shall meet at least twice a year. One meeting may be in the form of a retreat for cluster deans focusing on matters of pastoral care and mission. Another meeting may be with synod committee chairpersons for the purpose of coordinating mission efforts.

S11.51.10. BUDGET AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

S11.51.11. This committee shall have the responsibility, in consultation with the synod bishop, to prepare and present a comprehensive budget to the Synod Council for its consideration and presentation to the Synod Assembly. In the preparation of the budget the committee shall consult with committee and task force chairpersons as well as the chief executive officers of related or affiliated agencies and institutions and the appropriate agencies of the church.

S11.51.12. This committee also shall review the finances of the synod during the fiscal year as needed or as requested by the bishop or Synod Council.

S11.51.13. This committee shall have no more than twelve members elected to terms of four years by the Synod Council. As nearly as possible, one-fourth of the committee shall be elected annually. No person shall be eligible to serve more than two consecutive terms.

S11.53.10. SYNOD ASSEMBLY PLANNING COMMITTEE

S11.53.11. This committee shall have the responsibility for making arrangements for the Synod Assembly. This task force may appoint task forces to carry out specific functions in planning and facilitating the assembly.

S11.53.12. The committee shall be elected by the Synod Council. The members shall serve for the months needed to plan the Synod Assembly and their responsibilities will conclude at the end of the assembly.

S11.60.10. COMMITTEES OF THE OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

S11.60.11. Committees that relate directly to the Office of Bishop are: Consultation Committee, Discipline Committee, and Ecumenism and Interfaith Relations Committee.

S11.61.10. CONSULTATION COMMITTEE

S11.61.11. This committee shall function in accord with the procedures outlined in the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and S11.02 of this constitution.

S11.62.10. DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE

S11.62.11. This committee shall function in accord with the procedures outlined in the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and S11.03 of this constitution.

S11.63.10. ECUMENISM AND INTERFAITH RELATIONS COMMITTEE

S11.63.11. This committee shall foster and encourage ecumenical and interfaith relationships through education, dialogue, and events recommended by the bishop's office. It shall serve in an advisory capacity to the bishop on non-ELCA matters and functions.

S11.63.12. This committee appointed by the bishop shall have no more than eight members.

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.

S12.60.10. MISSION CLUSTER UNITS

S12.60.11. This Synod shall establish mission cluster units of approximately six to fifteen neighboring congregations. The number and composition of mission cluster units shall be determined by the Synod Council.

S12.60.12. The purpose of the mission cluster unit is to provide opportunities for congregations to partner in God's mission by fostering:

a. Participation in mission efforts beyond the congregation in the mission cluster unit.

b. Programming, training, and fellowship opportunities to support ministry in the mission cluster unit.

c. Fellowship and supportive relationships with clergy, rostered lay persons and/or their families.

S12.60.13. Each mission cluster unit shall have a clergy dean and other officers as determined by the mission cluster unit.

S12.60.14. Each mission cluster unit shall be responsible for selecting two nominees for a Synod Council position or two nominees for Churchwide Assembly voting member according to a schedule determined by the Nominating Committee of the synod.

S12.60.15. The clergy dean shall be elected in the spring by the rostered ministers of the cluster.

S12.60.18. Cluster deans shall be directly responsible to the bishop of the synod.

S12.60.19. The clergy dean shall be serving under call within the territory of the mission cluster unit.

S12.60.20. Should a clergy dean move from the mission cluster unit or resign as dean, as soon as is reasonably possible a successor will be elected at a meeting of the mission cluster unit duly called for that purpose. The successor will complete the two-year term.

S12.60.21. To enhance the purposes of the mission cluster unit, the clergy dean may take special responsibility to:

a. Assist the bishop as requested in extending pastoral care to rostered ministers and congregations.

b. Provide counsel to rostered ministers and/or their families when requested.

c. Foster supportive relationships among mission cluster unit rostered ministers and parish ministry associates.

d. Foster fellowship and supportive relationships among rostered ministers, parish ministry associates, and their families.

e. Help organize study groups, social events, etc., for rostered ministers, parish ministry associates, and their families.

S12.70.10. COALITIONS AND MINISTRY NETWORKS

S12.70.11. Coalitions and ministry networks may be formed and authorized by the Synod Council on the basis of mutual size, type of ministry, special ministries, unique concerns, or other reasons that may be identified.

CHAPTER 13.
CONGREGATIONS

†S13.01. Each congregation, except those certified as congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America by the uniting churches, prior to being listed in the roster of congregations of this synod, shall adopt the *Model Constitution for Congregations* or one acceptable to this synod that is not in contradiction to the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

a. **New Congregations.** A congregation newly formed by this church and any congregation seeking recognition and reception by this church shall:
   1) Accept the criteria for recognition and reception as a congregation of this church, fulfill the functions of the congregation, and accept the governance provisions as provided in Chapter 9 of the constitution and bylaws of this church.
   2) Adopt governing documents that include fully and without alterations the Preamble, Chapter I, where applicable, and all required provisions of Chapters 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 15, 16, 17, 18 and 19 in the Model Constitution for Congregations consistent with requirements of the constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of this church. Bylaws and continuing resolutions, appropriate for inclusion in these chapters and not in conflict with these required provisions in the Model Constitution for Congregations, the constitution of this synod, or the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, may be adopted as described in 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, leaders of the congregation should contact the ELCA synod bishop or staff where the congregation is located. The synod bishop or synod staff where the transferring or independent congregation is located shall confer with the congregation to assure its understanding and acceptance of commitment to and affiliation with this church.

c. **Recognition and reception.** Recognition and reception of additional congregations into this church is based upon the judgment of the synod that the congregations satisfy the criteria of 9.21. and 9.25.. The synod bishop shall provide for prompt reporting of such additions to the secretary of this church for addition to the roster of congregations.
   1) Recognition and reception of congregations newly formed by this church is accomplished by action of the Synod Council.

2) Recognition and reception of transferring or independent congregations is accomplished by the action of the Synod Assembly upon the recommendation of the Synod Council.
   a. If a congregation is a member of another church body, the leadership of the congregation first should consult with the appropriate authorities of that church body before taking action to leave its current church body. After such consultation, leaders of the congregation should contact the synod bishop or synod staff in this church where the congregation is located.
   b. 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 the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

†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.

S13.03. Each congregation of this synod shall be incorporated except congregations existing within institutions of the church.

S13.11. When a rostered minister resigns, the Congregation Council shall receive the letter of resignation, report to the congregation and at once notify the bishop of this synod.

S13.12. A congregation under financial obligation to its former rostered minister of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, or rostered minister of this church shall make satisfactory settlement of the obligation before calling a successor.

†S13.20. A congregation considering a relocation shall confer with the bishop of the synod in which it is territorially located and the appropriate unit of the churchwide organization before any steps are taken leading to such action. The approval of the Synod Council shall be received before any such action is effected.

†S13.21. A congregation considering development of an additional site to be used regularly for worship shall confer with the bishop of the synod in which it is territorially located and the appropriate unit of the churchwide organization before any steps are taken leading to such action.

†S13.22. Each congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America within the territory of this synod, except those which are in partnership with the Slovak Zion Synod, shall establish and maintain a relationship with this synod.

†S13.23. Provision 9.71. of the constitution of this church shall govern the relationship of this synod and a congregation of this synod regarding the property of the congregation. This synod may transfer or convey property to a congregation of the synod, subject to restrictions accepted by the congregation, including provision that if the Synod Council, in its sole and exclusive discretion, determines (1) that the property is not being used to serve the mission and ministry needs of this church, or (2) that the congregation has transferred, encumbered, mortgaged, or in any way burdened or

impaired any right, title, or interest in the property without the prior approval of the Synod Council, then title to the property shall revert to the synod, and the congregation, upon written demand, shall re-convey 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 the congregation's request or with its concurrence.

S13.30. Discipline

†S13.31. Congregations and members of congregations are subject to discipline in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 20 of the *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 Worshipping Communities and Outreach Ministries

S13.41. Worshipping communities and outreach ministries, authorized by the synod and 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 though 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, 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.

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 within the congregation;
   3) install regularly elected members of the Congregation 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*.

c. Every pastor shall:
   1) strive to extend the Kingdom of God in the community, in the nation and abroad;
   2) seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel;
   3) impart knowledge of this church and its wider ministry through distribution of its periodicals and other publications; and
   4) endeavor to increase the support given by the congregation to work of the ELCA churchwide organization and of this ELCA synod.

S14.13. The minister (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; (c) shall become a member of the congregation upon receipt and acceptance of the letter of call. In a parish of multiple congregations, the minister 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 minister to commend them, upon their consent, to the pastoral care of a Lutheran congregation nearer to their place of residence.

S14.15. Each minister of Word and Sacrament on the roll of this synod shall submit a written report of ministry to the bishop of the synod by June 1 of each year. Such reports shall become a part of the permanent file for both the congregation and the minister.

†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 constitution 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 thirty 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 fifteen 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 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 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. In the bishop's sole discretion, the bishop's committee may also present, as may be appropriate, either a report or report summary to the pastor and to the congregation together with the recommendations. 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 rostered 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 congregation 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. 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 ministers of congregations shall also attend the meetings of the mission cluster unit, or coalition to which the congregation belongs and shall attend the annual conference for ministers and lay professional leaders.

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:

c. 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, 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;

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 roll of this synod shall submit a written report of ministry to the bishop of the synod by June 1 of each year. Such reports shall become a part of the permanent file for both the congregation and the minister.

†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 the deacon's death or, following consultation with the synod bishop, for and 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.

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

S14.50.01. Parish Ministry Associates

S14.50.02. Certified parish ministry associates are persons identified and equipped for service in congregations when full-time pastoral services are not available or where ministry needs exceed the resources of present leadership. Certified parish ministry associates may be assigned and/or authorized by the bishop for certain leadership functions in specific locations for a specified length of time where they will work with a local rostered minister as supervisor.

S14.50.03. The Parish Ministry Associates Program is administered by a Steering Committee. This committee, appointed by the bishop of the synod, is responsible for general oversight of the program and is accountable to the bishop.

S14.50.04. The authority to remove from certification a parish ministry associate shall be the responsibility of the synodical bishop in consultation with the Parish Ministry Associates Steering Committee.

CHAPTER 15.
FINANCIAL MATTERS

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

†S15.11. Since the congregations, synods, and churchwide organizations 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 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 of each congregation's mission support as determined in consultation with the churchwide organization and approved by the Synod Assembly as part of its budget consideration.

c. Should the Synod Assembly not approve the proportionate share of mission support determined in consultation with the churchwide organization, a new consultation with the churchwide organization shall take place. The Synod Council is authorized to amend the budget adopted by the Synod Assembly to reflect the results of this consultation.

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

S15.13. Budget and 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, the Synod shall maintain a reserve in the unrestricted Operations Fund in an amount not to exceed 16% of the following year's operating expense budget, to maintain a consistent availability of resources to fund such expenses. The exact amount to be held in reserve shall be determined by the Treasurer of the Synod and shall be approved by the Synod Council.

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

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

†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 nor 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 expense for judgments, penalties, fines, settlements, excise taxes, reasonable attorneys' fees, disbursements, and similar required expenditures.

†S16.02. Whenever a person who, while a Synod Council member, officer, committee member, or employee of this synod, is or was serving at the request of this synod as (or whose duties in that position involve or involved service in the capacity of) a director, officer, partner, trustee, employee, or agent of another organization, is or was made or threatened to be made a party to a proceeding by reason of such capacity, then such person shall be entitled to indemnification only if (a) the Synod Council has established a process for determining whether a person serving in the capacity described in this section shall be entitled to indemnification in any specific case, and (b) that process has been applied in making a specific determination that such person is entitled to indemnification.

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

†S17.02. The synod bishop and the Executive Committee of the Synod Council shall receive expressions of concern from rostered ministers, 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 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 parities 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 in America.

†S18.12. Whenever the secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America officially informs this synod that the Churchwide Assembly has amended any non-required provision of the *Constitution for Synods*, this constitution may be amended to reflect

any such amendment by a majority vote at any subsequent meeting of the Synod Assembly without presentation at a prior Synod Assembly. An amendment that is identical to a provision of the *Constitution for Synods* shall be deemed to have been ratified upon its adoption by this synod. The Church Council, through the secretary of this church, shall be given prompt notification of its adoption.

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

a. Introduced with the support of at least 25 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 ratified unchanged by a two-thirds vote at the next regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.

b. The Synod Council may propose an amendment, with notice to be sent to the congregations of this synod at least six months prior to the next regular meeting of the Synod Assembly. Such an amendment shall require for adoption a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting at such a regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.

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

†S18.20. Amendments to Bylaws

†S18.21. This synod may adopt bylaws not in conflict with this constitution nor with the constitution and bylaws of the churchwide organization. This synod may amend its bylaws at any meeting of the Synod Assembly by a two-thirds vote of voting members of the assembly present and voting. Newly adopted bylaws and amendments to existing bylaws shall be reported to the secretary of this church.

†S18.30. Amendments to Continuing Resolutions

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

CHAPTER 19.
INSTITUTIONS AND AGENCIES

S19.01. The Nebraska Synod acknowledges its responsibility, together with other synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as may be associated with it for that purpose, to maintain and strengthen the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago and Wartburg Seminary at Dubuque, Iowa, spiritually and academically, and its responsibility to contribute toward their basic financial support.

S19.02. This synod accepts and sustains a supporting relationship to Midland University of Fremont, Nebraska, as a recognized college of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in

America with a threefold concern for its character as a Christian institution of learning, its academic excellence, and its material welfare.

S19.03. Recognition of social ministry agencies and institutions shall be granted or withdrawn by the Synod Assembly in accordance with the standards and procedures established by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and upon the recommendation of the Synod Council.

S19.04. The boards of trustees or directors of the theological seminaries, the colleges, social ministry agencies and institutions, related to this Synod shall submit written reports to the regular meetings of the Synod Assembly. Those elected to the boards of these institutions and agencies elected by this synod may, as a group, append comments and recommendations to such reports.

CHAPTER 20.
TEMPORARY MATTERS

S20.02.A87. *The Synod Council shall determine the site for Synod Headquarters and any other offices according to the following criteria:*

a. Communication both with synod and larger church.

b. Accessibility
   1) by synod congregations by road, rail or air,
   2) for resource persons from outside the synod,
   3) air transportation and flight scheduling.

c. Tension between demographic and geographic centers of new synod

d. Cost (not only of rental and facilities but of travel for constituents)

e. Ecumenical contacts and relationships

f. Spokesperson (Bishop) on behalf of the church to the world