

**CONSTITUTION
FOR THE
SOUTHEASTERN SYNOD
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA**

**Chapter 1.
NAME, INCORPORATION, SEAL, AND LOCATION**

- †S1.01. The name of this synod, as determined by the Churchwide Assembly, shall be Southeastern Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- †S1.02. For the purposes of this constitution and the accompanying bylaws, the Southeastern Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is hereafter designated as "this synod" or "the synod."
- †S1.11. This synod shall be incorporated. Amendments to the articles of incorporation of this synod shall be submitted to the Church Council for ratification before filing.
- †S1.21. The seal of the Southeastern Synod is two concentric circles surrounding a cross superimposed on an outlined map of the states of the synod. The outer circle contains the words "The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America-Southeastern Synod." The inner circle contains the names of the states comprising the territory of the synod.

**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: Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Tennessee.
- †S3.02. "Determined by the Churchwide Assembly," as stipulated by †S3.01. is understood to include the reported changes in synod relationship made by any congregation in a border area agreed under ELCA bylaws 10.01.01. and 10.02.02.

**Chapter 4.
CONFESSION OF FAITH**

- †S4.01. This synod confesses the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- †S4.02. This synod confesses Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and the Gospel as the power of God for the salvation of all who believe.
- a. Jesus Christ is the Word of God incarnate, through whom everything was made and through whose life, death, and resurrection God fashions a new creation.

- b. The proclamation of God's message to us as both Law and Gospel is the Word of God, revealing judgment and mercy through word and deed, beginning with the Word in creation, continuing in the history of Israel, and centering in all its fullness in the person and work of Jesus Christ.
- c. The canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the written Word of God. Inspired by God's Spirit speaking through their authors, they record and announce God's revelation centering in Jesus Christ. Through them God's Spirit speaks to us to create and sustain Christian faith and fellowship for service in the world.

- †S4.03. This synod accepts the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God and the authoritative source 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 interpretation of the faith of the Church.
- †S4.07. This synod confesses the Gospel, recorded in the Holy Scriptures and confessed in the ecumenical creeds and Lutheran confessional writings, as the power of God to create and sustain the Church for God's mission in the world.

Chapter 5. NATURE OF THE CHURCH

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

Chapter 6. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

- †S6.01. The Church is a people created by God in Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit, called and sent to bear witness to God's creative, redeeming, and sanctifying activity in the world.
- †S6.02. To participate in God's mission, this synod as a part of the Church shall:
 - a. Proclaim God's saving Gospel of justification by grace for Christ's sake through faith alone, according to the apostolic witness in the Holy Scripture, preserving and transmitting the Gospel faithfully to future generations.
 - b. Carry out Christ's Great Commission by reaching out to all people to bring them to faith in Christ and by doing

all ministry with a global awareness consistent with the understanding of God as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier of all.

- c. Serve in response to God’s love to meet human needs, caring for the sick and aged, advocating dignity and justice for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, and standing with the poor and powerless, and committing itself to their needs.**
- d. Worship God in proclamation of the Word and administration of the sacraments and through lives of prayer, praise, thanksgiving, witness, and service.**
- e. Nurture its members in the Word of God so as to grow in faith and hope and love, to see daily life as the primary setting for the exercise of their Christian calling, and to use the gifts of the Spirit for their life together and for their calling in the world.**
- f. Manifest the unity given to the people of God by living together in the love of Christ and by joining with other Christians in prayer and action to express and preserve the unity which the Spirit gives.**

- S6.02.A16** *This synod shall advocate and promote multicultural ministry, in its broadest sense, by:*
- a. providing the financial advocacy, policy, planning, and oversight of multicultural ministries within this synod;*
 - b. advocating and facilitating the study and analysis of multicultural work by the constituents of this synod;*
 - c. advocating and facilitating the increase of multicultural participation within the congregations of this synod;*
 - d. coordinating the efforts of this synod in the development of new and support for existing multicultural ministries; and*
 - e. coordinating the multicultural activities of this synod with other expressions of this church, especially with the Domestic Mission unit, the Ethnic Specific and Multicultural Ministries Team, and the Advocacy Team.*

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

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

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

- a. providing for pastoral care of congregations, ministers of Word and Sacrament, and ministers of Word and Service in the synod, including:
 - 1) approving candidates for the ministry of Word and Sacrament in cooperation with the appropriate seminaries of this church, which may be done through multi-synodical committees;
 - 2) authorizing ordinations and ordaining ministers of Word and Sacrament on behalf of this church;
 - 3) approving ministers of Word and Service, which may be done through multi-synodical committees;
 - 4) authorizing consecrations and consecrating ministers of Word and Service on behalf of this church; and
 - 5) consulting in the call process for rostered ministers.

- b. providing for leadership recruitment, preparation, and support in accordance with churchwide standards and policies, including:
 - 1) nurturing and supporting congregations and lay leaders;
 - 2) seeking and recruiting qualified candidates for the rostered ministries of this church;
 - 3) making provision for pastoral care, call review, and guidance;
 - 4) encouraging and supporting persons on the rosters of this church in stewardship of their abilities, care of self, and pursuit of continuing education to undergird their effectiveness of service; and
 - 5) supporting recruitment of leaders for this church's colleges, universities, seminaries, and social ministry organizations.
- c. providing for discipline of congregations, ministers of Word and Sacrament, and ministers of Word and Service; as well as for termination of call, appointment, adjudication, and appeals consistent with Chapter 20 of this church's constitution.
- d. providing for archives in conjunction with other synods.

†S6.03.02. In planning for, facilitating, and nurturing 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 partnership funding;
- d. supporting relationships with and providing partnership funding on behalf of colleges, universities, and campus ministries;
- e. maintaining relationships with and providing partnership funding on behalf of seminaries and continuing education centers;
- f. fostering supporting relationships with camps and other outdoor ministries;

- g. fostering supporting relationships with preschools, elementary schools, and secondary schools operated by congregations of the synod;
- h. fostering relationships with ecumenical and global partners;
- i. cooperating with other synods and the churchwide organization in creating, using, and supporting regions to carry out those functions of the synod which can best be done cooperatively with other synods and the churchwide organization.

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

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

†S6.04. **Except as otherwise provided in this constitution and bylaws, the Synod Council shall establish processes that will ensure that at least 60 percent of the members of the synod assemblies, councils, committees, boards, and other organizational units shall be laypersons; and that, as nearly as possible, 50 percent of the lay members of assemblies, councils, committees, boards, or other organizational units shall be female and 50 percent shall be male; and that, where possible, the representation of ministers of Word and Sacrament shall be both male and female. This synod shall establish processes that will enable it to reach a minimum goal that 10 percent of its assemblies, councils, committees, boards, or other organizational units be persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English.**

†S6.04.01. It is the goal of this synod that 10 percent of the membership of synod assemblies, the Synod Council, committees, task forces, conferences, boards, and/or other organizational units be persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English.

†S6.04.02. It is the goal of this synod that at least 10 percent of the voting members of the Synod Assembly, Synod Council, committees, and organizational units of this synod be youth and young adults. The Synod Council shall establish a plan for implementing this goal. For purposes of the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of this synod, the term “youth” means a voting member of a congregation who has not reached the age of 18 at the time of election or appointment for service. The term “young adult” means a voting member of a congregation between the ages of 18 and 30 at the time of election or appointment for service.

S6.04.C17. *In the election of committee members and task force members, consideration shall also be given to persons in the following categories: geographical location and interests, urban, suburban and rural representation and interests, per capita representation, persons with calls to special service, persons on leave from call, retired persons, disabled persons, youth, and young adults, as well as parish pastors, persons on the official Word and Service roster, and other lay persons.*

†S6.05. **Each assembly, council, committee, board, commission, task force, or other body of this synod or any synodical units shall be conclusively presumed to have been properly constituted, and neither the method of selection nor the composition of any such assembly, council, committee, board, commission, task force, or other body may be challenged in a court of law by any person or be used as the basis of a challenge in a court of law to the validity or effect of any action taken or authorized by any such assembly, council, committee, board, commission, task force, or other body.**

S6.05.A99. *(Synod Vision Statement) We will love God and neighbor so that all people, transformed by the Holy Spirit and believing in Jesus Christ, will be His disciples.*

S6.05.B99. *(Synod Mission Statement) Walking together in the Great Commission, the Southeastern Synod will faithfully and inclusively share a message of grace and faith in Jesus Christ with all peoples. We will witness and serve, nurture*

faith through baptism and teaching, and restore peace and unity to all of God's creation.

S6.05.C16. *In keeping with S6.05.A99, this Synod will work faithfully in conjunction with the Domestic Mission unit, the ELCA Mission Investment Fund, the Southeastern Synod Great Commission Endowment Fund, Mission Partners, and existing congregations toward the development of new congregations in the Southeastern Synod.*

†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 constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.**

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

S7.11.01. The time and place of the Southeastern Synod Assembly shall be determined by the Synod Council. The time and place for the next regular assembly normally shall be announced at least six months prior to the assembly.

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. **The secretary of this synod shall have the responsibility to give notice of the time and place of all meetings of the Synod Assembly. The time and place of all regular and special meetings of the Synod Assembly shall be determined by the Synod Council.**

S7.13.01. Notice of the time and place of all meetings of the Synod Assembly shall be published in a synodical publication and also sent electronically not less than 30 days prior to the meeting to each congregation of this synod and to each person on the roster of this synod as the roster exists 45 days prior to the meeting.

S7.14. **One-half of the members of the Synod Assembly shall constitute a quorum.**

†S7.21. **The membership of the Synod Assembly, of which at least 60 per-cent of the voting membership shall be composed of lay persons, shall be constituted as follows:**

- a.** **All ministers of Word and Sacrament under call on the roster of this synod in attendance at the Synod Assembly shall be voting members.**
- b.** **All ministers of Word and Service, under call, on the rosters of this synod shall be voting members in the Synod Assembly, in addition to the voting membership of lay members of congregations provided in †S7.21.c.**
- c.** **A minimum of one lay member elected by each congregation with fewer than 175 baptized members and a minimum of two lay members elected by each congregation with 175 or more baptized members related to this synod, normally one of whom shall be male and one of whom shall be female, shall be voting members. The Synod Council shall establish a formula to provide additional lay representation from congregations on the basis of the**

number of baptized members in the congregation. The Synod Council shall seek to ensure that, as nearly as possible, 50 percent of the lay members of the assembly shall be female and 50 percent shall be male. Additional members from each congregation normally shall be equally divided between male and female.

d. Voting membership shall include the officers of this synod.

S7.21.A17. The Synod Council shall encourage congregations to elect at least one youth or young adult as a voting member of the Synod Assembly. Such elections shall not increase the number of voting members allocated to each congregation in accordance with †S7.21.c. Each year the Synod Council shall review the age distribution of voting members of the most recently completed Synod Assembly to determine progress toward the inclusivity goal stated in †S6.04.02.

*S7.21.B16. In order to ensure that the Assembly is constituted of at least sixty percent lay voting members and that these lay voting members be, as nearly as possible, fifty percent females and fifty percent males, congregations shall elect voting members of the Synod Assembly according to the following formula:
Congregations with 499 or fewer baptized members (as recorded in the previous year's official parochial report) shall elect two lay voting members. One shall be female and one shall be male.
Congregations with 500-999 baptized members (as recorded in the previous year's official parochial report) shall elect three voting members. Two shall be female and one shall be male or two shall be male and one shall be female.
Congregations with 1000 or more baptized members (as recorded in the previous year's official parochial report) shall elect four voting members. Two shall be female and two shall be male.*

†S7.21.01. Voting members shall begin serving with the opening of a regular Synod Assembly and shall continue serving until voting members are seated at the next regular Synod Assembly.

S7.22. This synod may establish processes that permit retired rostered ministers, or those designated as disabled, or on leave from call, on the roster of the synod to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, consistent with †S7.21.c. If the synod does not establish processes to permit the rostered ministers specified above to serve as voting members, they shall have voice but not vote in the meetings of the Synod Assembly.

S7.22.01. Each retired minister of Word and Sacrament and each minister of Word and Sacrament on leave from call on the roster of this synod who submits the required report of his or her ministry to the bishop in accordance with provision **S14.05.** shall be a voting member of the Synod Assembly.

S7.22.02. The Synod Council shall determine the number of retired ministers of Word and Sacrament and ministers of Word and Sacrament on leave from call who may be voting members of the Synod Assembly and adjust the formula for lay representation from congregations so that at least 60 percent of the voting membership of the Synod Assembly shall be composed of lay persons.

S7.22.03. Each retired or on leave from call rostered minister of Word and Service on the roster of this synod who submits the required report of his or her ministry to the bishop shall be a voting member of the Synod Assembly.

S7.22.A17. Retired Rostered Persons and their spouses who are not registered voting members of an assembly may attend the plenary session in which the anniversary of their official entry into rostered ministry is celebrated. These persons would receive a "Guest" badge from the registration desk without paying a registration fee. They would be limited to the visitors section of the assembly and would not have voice or vote.

S7.22.B16. Each Interim Pastor appointed by the Bishop to serve in one of our congregations who is rostered with a full communion partner denomination and who submits a report of his or her ministry three months prior to the Synod Assembly shall be a voting member of the Synod Assembly.

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

S7.23.A18. The board of directors of the Southeastern Synod Lutheran Youth Organization (SESLYO) shall have voice and vote in the meetings of the Synod Assembly. The voting bloc from the SESLYO board of directors shall not exceed 16 members.

- S7.23.A93.** *A designated representative, or in the absence of such designation, the president, of the Lutheran Men in Mission and Southeastern Women of the ELCA shall have voice but not vote in the meetings of the Synod Assembly.*
- S7.23.B16.** *Synodically authorized ministers, appointed by the bishop, shall have voice and vote as lay persons at each Synod Assembly.*
- S7.24.** **Ministers under call on the rosters of this synod shall remain as members of the Synod Assembly so long as they remain under call and so long as their names appear on the rosters of this synod. Lay members of the Synod Assembly representing congregations shall continue as such until replaced by the election of new members or until they have been disqualified by termination of membership. Normally, congregations will hold elections prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.**
- †S7.25.** **Except as otherwise provided in this constitution or in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, each voting member of the Synod Assembly shall be a voting member of a congregation of this synod.**
- S7.25.01.** Certain ministers of Word and Sacrament, such as ELCA rostered seminary professors assigned to this synod, may be voting members of the Synod Assembly while not being voting members of a congregation of this synod. All other voting members of the Synod Assembly must be voting members of congregations of this synod.
- S7.26.** **This synod may establish processes through the Synod Council that permit representatives of congregations under development and authorized worshipping communities of the synod, which have been authorized under ELCA bylaw 10.02.03., to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, consistent with †S7.21.**
- S7.26.A01.** *Synodically Authorized Worshipping Communities shall have the privilege of voice and vote at Synod Assemblies consistent with the provisions of S7.21.c.*
- 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 of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America the privilege of both voice and vote in the Synod Assembly during the period of that minister's service in a congregation of this church.**
- S7.28.** **Duly elected voting members of the Synod Council who are not otherwise voting members of the Synod Assembly under †S7.21. shall be granted the privilege of both voice and vote as members of the Synod Assembly.**
- †S7.31.** **Proxy and absentee voting shall not be permitted in the transaction of any business of this synod.**
- S7.32.** **Robert's Rules of Order, latest edition, shall govern parliamentary procedures 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.**
- S7.34.** **Any proposal to appropriate funds, whether by amendment to the budget or otherwise, which is presented to the Synod Assembly without the approval of the Synod Council, shall require a two-thirds vote for adoption.**

Chapter 8. OFFICERS

- †S8.01.** **The officers of this synod shall be a bishop, a vice-president, a secretary, and a treasurer.**
- S8.10.** **Bishop**
- †S8.11.** **The bishop shall be elected by the Synod Assembly. The bishop shall be a minister of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.**

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

- a. Preach, teach, and administer the sacraments in accord with the Confession of Faith of this church.
- b. Have primary responsibility for the ministry of Word and Sacrament in this synod and its congregations, providing pastoral care and leadership for this synod, its congregations, its ministers of Word and Sacrament, and its ministers of Word and Service.
- c. Exercise solely this church's power to ordain (or provide for the ordination by another synodical bishop of) approved candidates who have received and accepted a properly issued, duly attested letter of call for the office of ministry of Word and Sacrament (and as provided in the bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America).
- d. Consecrate (or provide for the consecration of) approved candidates who have received and accepted a properly issued, duly attested letter of call for service as ministers of Word and Service.
- e. Attest letters of call for persons called to serve congregations in the synod, letters of call for persons called by the Synod Council, and letters of call for persons on the rosters of this synod called by the Church Council.
- f. Install (or provide for the installation of) rostered ministers whose calls the bishop has attested.
- g. Exercise leadership in the mission of this church and in so doing:
 - 1) Interpret and advocate the mission and theology of the whole church;
 - 2) Lead in fostering support for and commitment to the mission of this church within this synod;
 - 3) Coordinate the use of the resources available to this synod as it seeks to promote the health of this church's life and witness in the areas served by this synod.
 - 4) Submit a report to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly concerning this synod's life and work.
 - 5) Advise and counsel this synod's related institutions and organizations.
- h. Practice leadership in the mission of this church and in so doing:
 - 1) Exercise oversight of the preaching, teaching, and administration of the sacraments within this synod in accord with the Confession of Faith of this church;
 - 2) Be responsible for administering the constitutionally established processes for the resolution of controversies and for the discipline of rostered ministers and congregations of this synod;
 - 3) Be its chief ecumenical officer.
 - 4) Consult regularly with other synodical bishops and the Conference of Bishops;
 - 5) Foster awareness of other churches throughout the Lutheran world communion and, where appropriate, engage in contact with leaders of those churches;
 - 6) Cultivate communion in faith and mission with appropriate Christian judicatory leaders functioning within the territory of this synod; and
 - 7) Be ex officio a member of the Churchwide Assembly.
- i. Oversee and administer the work of this synod and in so doing:
 - 1) Serve as the president of this synod corporation and be the chief executive and administrative officer of this synod, who is authorized and empowered, in the name of this synod, to sign deeds or other instruments and to

affix the seal of this synod;

- 2) **Preside at all meetings of the Synod Assembly and provide for the preparation of the agenda for the Synod Assembly, Synod Council, and the council's Executive Committee;**
- 3) **Ensure that the constitution and bylaws of this synod and of the churchwide organization are duly observed within this synod, and that the actions of this synod in conformity there-with are carried into effect;**
- 4) **Exercise supervision over the work of the other officers;**
- 5) **Coordinate 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 this synod, except as otherwise provided in this constitution;**
- 8) **Provide for preparation and maintenance of synodical rosters containing the names and addresses of all rostered ministers of this synod and a record of the calls under which they are serving or the date on which they become retired or disabled;**
- 9) **Annually bring to the attention of the Synod Council the names of all rostered ministers on leave from call or engaged in approved graduate study in conformity with the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of this church and pursuant to prior action of this synod through the Synod Council;**
- 10) **Provide for prompt reporting to the secretary of this church of:**
 - (a) **additions to and subtractions from the rosters of this synod and the register of congregations;**
 - (b) **the issuance of a certificate of transfer for rostered ministers in good standing who have received and accepted a properly issued, duly attested, regular letter of call under the jurisdiction of another synod; and**
 - (c) **the entrance of the names of such persons for whom proper certificates of transfer have been received;**
- 11) **Provide for preparation and maintenance of a register of the congregations of this synod and the names of the lay persons who have been elected to represent them; and**
- 12) **Appoint a statistician of this synod, who shall secure the parochial reports of the congregations, and make the reports available to the secretary of this church for collation, analysis, and distribution of the statistical summaries to this synod and the other synods of this church.**

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

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

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

†S8.16. **Conflicts of Interest**

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

- a. Whenever a synodical bishop determines that a matter of the kind described in †S8.16.01.b. may require his or her determination or action with respect to a related individual as defined in †S8.16.01.c., the synodical bishop shall withdraw from personal involvement in such matter and shall so notify the presiding bishop. The presiding bishop shall then appoint another synodical bishop from the same region to handle the matter to conclusion. In dealing with such matter, the appointed bishop shall exercise all of the functions and authority to the same extent as if the appointed bishop were the elected bishop of the withdrawing bishop's synod.
- b. Matters include any proceedings under Chapter 20, proceedings under provision 7.46 of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* (†S14.13.), candidacy, reinstatement, and similar matters where determinations or actions by the synodical bishop could change, limit, restrict, approve, authorize, or deny the related individual's ministry on one of the official rosters of this church.
- c. A related individual is one who, with respect to the synodical bishop, is a spouse, parent, son, daughter, sibling, uncle, aunt, niece, nephew, grandparent, grandchild, including corresponding members of blended families and in-laws (parent, son, daughter, or sibling of a spouse, spouse of a sibling, or the parent or sibling of the spouse of a sibling).

S8.20. Vice-President

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

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

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

S8.30. Secretary

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

S8.31.01. The secretary shall not receive a salary for the performance of the duties of the office.

†S8.32. The secretary shall:

- a. **Keep the minutes of all meetings of the Synod Assembly, and Synod Council, be responsible for the printing and distribution of such minutes, and perform such other duties as this synod may from time to time direct.**
- b. **Be authorized and empowered, in the name of this synod, to attest all instruments which require the same, and which are signed and sealed by the bishop.**
- c. **In consultation with the bishop, classify and arrange all important papers and documents and deposit them in the archives of this synod.**
- d. **Submit to the secretary of this church at least four months before the Churchwide Assembly a certified list of the regular and alternate voting members elected by the Synod Assembly.**

S8.32.A94. *The secretary shall have responsibility for reviewing the synod constitution.*

S8.40. Treasurer

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

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

- a. Management of the monies and accounts of this synod, its deeds, mortgages, contracts, evidences of claims and revenues and trust funds, and holding the same at all times subject to the order of this synod.
- b. Investment of funds upon the authorization of the Synod Council.
- c. Receipt and acknowledgment of offerings, contributions, and bequests made to this synod, collection of interest and income from it invested funds, and payment of 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 this church the funds received by this synod for the general work of this church.
- d. Maintenance of regular accounts with each congregation of this synod and informing the congregation, at least quarterly, of the status of this account.
- e. Rendering at each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly a full, detailed, and duly audited report of the receipts and disbursements in the several accounts of this synod for the preceding fiscal year, together with the tabulation, for record and publication in the minutes, of the contributions from the congregations.
- f. 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.

S8.43. The treasurer shall serve ex-officio as a member of the Budget and Finance Committee.

S8.50. General provisions

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

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

S8.51.01. The bishop may be re-elected to additional terms. The vice-president, secretary, and treasurer shall be eligible for re-election; however, in no event may a person serve as vice-president, secretary, or treasurer for more than eight years, whether consecutive or not.

S8.52. The terms of the officers shall begin on the first day of the third 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 of the 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.

S8.54.01. Periods of service by any person elected to care for the responsibilities of the bishop shall not be considered for the purpose of determining the time periods described in provision †**S8.51.**

- 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 office until an election of a new officer can be held or, in the case of temporary disability, until the officer is able to serve again. The term of the successor officer, elected by the next Synod Assembly, shall be four years. If the treasurer is appointed by the Synod Council, the Synod Council shall appoint a new treasurer to a four-year term.
- S8.55.01.** Periods of service by any person elected to care for the responsibilities of any officer shall not be considered for the purposes of determining the time periods described in provision †S8.51.
- †S8.56.** The Executive Committee of the Synod Council shall determine whether an officer is unable to serve; the officer may appeal the decision of the Executive Committee by requesting a hearing before the Synod Council. A meeting to determine the ability of an officer to serve shall be called upon the request of at least three members of the Executive Committee and prior written notice of the meeting shall be given to the officer in question at least ten calendar days prior to the meeting.
- †S8.57.** The recall or dismissal of an officer and the vacating of office may be effected for willful disregard or violation of the constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of this church; for such physical or mental disability as renders the officer incapable of performing the duties of office; or for such conduct as would subject the officer to disciplinary action as a rostered minister or as a member of a congregation of this church.
- a. Proceedings for the recall or dismissal of a synodical bishop shall be instituted by written petition by:
 - 1) the Synod Council on an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of its elected members present and voting;
 - 2) the Synod Assembly on an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of its members present and voting;
 - 3) at least 10 synodical bishops; or
 - 4) the presiding bishop of this church.
 - b. Proceedings for the recall or dismissal of an officer of a synod, other than the synodical bishop, shall be instituted by written petition by:
 - 1) the Synod Council on an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of its elected members present and voting;
 - 2) the Synod Assembly on an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of its members present and voting; or
 - 3) the synodical bishop.
 - c. The petition shall be filed with the chair of the Committee on Appeals (in care of the secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 8765 West Higgins Road, Chicago, Illinois 60631) and shall set forth the specific charge or charges.
 - d. Upon the filing of a written petition, the Executive Committee of the Synod Council may temporarily suspend the officer from service in the synod without prejudice, but with continuation of compensation, including benefits, if the officer is a salaried employee of the synod.
 - e. In the case of alleged physical or mental incapacity of an officer of the synod, the procedures outlined in †S8.56. shall be followed, and such officer shall comply with the decision of the Synod Council. If such officer fails or refuses to comply, the Synod Council may proceed to petition for recall or dismissal as follows:
 - 1) the Synod Council will submit a written report of their findings and the basis of their decision to the Committee on Appeals.
 - 2) the Committee on Appeals, other than those who are disqualified, shall review the findings and decision of the Synod Council and by an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of those present and voting may adopt the findings and grant the petition.
 - f. If the synod officer is a minister of Word and Sacrament, grounds for recall or dismissal include those set forth in ELCA bylaw 20.21.01. and as defined under the process described in ELCA constitutional provisions 20.20. and 20.21. as grounds for discipline. If the officer is a minister of Word and Service, grounds for recall or dismissal include those set forth in ELCA bylaw 20.22.01. and as defined under the process described in ELCA constitutional provisions 20.20. and 20.21. as grounds for discipline.
 - g. If the officer is a layperson, grounds for recall or dismissal include those set forth in ELCA bylaw 20.41.01. as grounds for discipline.
 - h. If the case of alleged willful disregard or violation of the constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions or of alleged conduct as would subject the officer to disciplinary action, the following procedures shall apply:
 - 1) the petition shall be referred to the Committee on Appeals, which shall function as the discipline hearing committee that shall conduct a hearing in accordance with the rules provided for in ELCA bylaw 20.21.16. except to the extent that those rules are in conflict with the provisions of this bylaw; and
 - 2) the members of the Committee on Appeals, other than those who are disqualified, may grant the petition by an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of those present and voting.
 - i. Written notice of a decision by the Committee on Appeals that the charges have been sustained shall be given to the affected officer and to the Synod Council, and the office shall be vacated.

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

Chapter 9. NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

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

S9.01.A07. Elections shall be conducted in a manner that encourages the Synod Assembly to be open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, without overt campaigning or electioneering tactics by nominees, potential nominees and others in attendance at the assembly.

S9.01.10. Nominations

S9.01.11. Nominating Committee Nominations

- a. The Nominating Committee shall nominate one or more persons for the position of vice president, in accordance with S9.05.
- b. Should the Synod Council not authorize a youth organization to nominate at least one person for the youth position on the Synod Council, the Nominating Committee shall nominate at least two persons for the youth position on the Synod Council. The person nominated shall be a voting member of a congregation of this synod in at least the tenth grade. No person shall be nominated for the youth position who cannot complete his or her term prior to graduation from high school.
- c. The Nominating Committee shall nominate at least two persons for the young adult position on the Synod Council.

S9.01.12. Synod Council Nominations

- a. The Synod Council shall make nominations for the positions of secretary and treasurer in accordance with S9.06 and S9.07.
- b. The Synod Council shall nominate at least one person per vacancy for the member-at-large positions on the Synod Council.
- c. The Synod Council annually may authorize a synod-wide youth organization to nominate at least one person for the youth position on the Synod Council. The person nominated shall be a voting member of a congregation of this synod in at least the tenth grade. No person shall be nominated for the youth position who cannot complete his or her term prior to graduation from high school. Nominations shall be reported to the synod office at least three weeks prior to the next Synod Assembly, at which elections will take place. If the Synod Council does not authorize a youth organization to make such nomination, then the Nominating Committee shall serve as the nominating body.

S9.01.13. Nominations from the Floor

- a. Nominations from the floor shall be permitted for all positions.
- b. Persons nominated from the floor shall match any criteria established for such position, including, without limitation, those criteria established by virtue of provision †S6.04.
- c. In the materials provided in advance to each member of the Synod Assembly, the Nominating Committee shall include the criteria applicable to each position for which elections are to be held.

- S9.01.14.** The Nominating Committee and the Synod Council shall strive to insure that all persons nominated by the Nominating Committee and the Synod Council for any position possess the necessary competence and experience for the position.
- S9.01.14.A17.** *Nominations of qualified persons for service on those committees, task forces, clusters, coalitions, and other groups of this synod shall be made on an ongoing basis from all organizations and individuals of this church, including congregations, ministers of Word and Sacrament, ministers of Word and Service, conference meetings, conference representatives on the Synod Council, conference chairs, and deans. Such nominations shall be sent to offices of this synod for review by the Executive Committee. Geographic distribution of nominees may be taken into consideration by the Executive Committee in the making of recommendations for nominations to the Nominating Committee and the Synod Council.*
- †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.**
- S9.02.10.** Elections Other Than for Bishop
- S9.02.11.** 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 (plus any ties necessary to include the number of persons on the next ballot equal to at least twice the number of unfilled vacancies). On each ballot, Synod Assembly members may cast one vote for each vacancy remaining unfilled. Synod Assembly members shall not cast more than one vote for any individual person on each ballot.
- S9.02.12.** Elections utilizing criteria established in accordance with provision†**S6.04.** shall be treated as separate elections.
- S9.02.12.A11.** *Whenever the number of churchwide assembly voting members is expected to include at least two persons of color or primary language other than English and the synod vice president is expected to fill one of those positions, then one of the other churchwide assembly voting member positions shall be designated for either (a) an inclusive lay male if the vice president is female or (b) an inclusive lay female if the vice president is male.*
- S9.02.13.** All persons elected to any position, whether nominated by the Nominating Committee or not, shall strive to represent this church and this synod and not a particular geographic area.
- S9.03.** **Reserved.**
- S9.04.** **The bishop shall be elected by the Synod Assembly by ecclesiastical ballot. Three-fourths of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election on the first ballot. If no one is elected, the first ballot shall be considered the nominating ballot. Three-fourths of the legal votes cast on the second ballot shall be necessary for election. The third ballot shall be limited to the seven persons (plus any ties necessary to include at least seven persons on the next ballot) who received the greatest number legal of votes on the second ballot, and two-thirds of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. The fourth ballot shall be limited to the three persons (plus any ties necessary to include at least three persons on the next ballot) who receive the greatest number of legal votes on the third ballot and 60 % of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. On subsequent ballots a majority of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. These ballots shall be limited to the two persons (plus any ties necessary to include at least two persons on the next ballot) who receive the greatest number of legal votes on the previous ballot.**
- S9.05.** **The Nominating Committee shall nominate at least one person for vice president; additional nominations may be made from the floor.**
- S9.06.** **The Synod Council shall nominate at least one person for secretary; additional nominations may be made from the floor.**
- S9.07.** **If the treasurer is elected, the Synod Council shall nominate at least one person for treasurer; additional nominations may be made from the floor.**
- S9.08.** **In all elections, except for the bishop, the names of the persons receiving the highest number of 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 Synod Assembly.
- †S9.10.** When notified by the secretary of this church, on behalf of the Nominating Committee of the Churchwide Assembly, the Synod Assembly shall nominate two persons in the specified categories for possible election by the Churchwide Assembly to the Church Council.
- S9.11.** The Synod Council shall elect or appoint representatives to the steering committee of its region.
- †S9.12** Background checks and screening shall be required and completed for persons nominated as synodical officers prior to their election, if possible, or as soon as practical after their election. The specific procedures and timing of background checks and screening shall be determined by the Synod Council.
- S9.12.A08.** *The Synod Council Executive Committee shall provide for background checks for persons nominated for synodical office prior to the Synod Assembly at which the election will take place or as soon as possible after the Synod Assembly for newly elected officers nominated from the floor who were not identified as nominees prior to the assembly. The process shall be as follows:*
- a. Prior to the Synod Assembly appropriate notice of the background check requirement and protocol will be provided to voting members, potential nominees, and others as directed by the Synod Council.*
 - b. Nominees and newly elected officers are required to provide written consent to a background check and all information necessary to complete a background check, which should be completed prior to the Synod Assembly with respect to nominees and prior to installation for newly elected officers, if possible.*
 - c. The Synod Council's Executive Committee shall designate one Executive Committee or Synod Council member to obtain the background checks.*
 - d. All background checks for nominees and newly elected officers will entail a criminal background check. A financial background check will be completed for nominees for treasurer. The Executive Committee shall decide whether additional types of background checks are appropriate for each officer position.*
 - e. The background check results shall be provided to that nominee or elected officer and to the Synod Council's Executive Committee. Further disclosure of the results may be determined by the Executive Committee.*
 - f. The Executive Committee may adopt other procedures or protocols as are necessary to provide for background checks for nominees and newly elected synodical officers and shall report such actions to the Synod Council.*

Chapter 10. **SYNOD COUNCIL**

- †S10.01.** The Synod Council consisting of the four officers of the synod, 10 to 24 other members, and at least one youth and at least one young adult shall be elected by the Synod Assembly.
- a.** Each person elected to the Synod Council shall be a voting member of a congregation of this synod, with the exception of ministers on a roster of this synod who reside outside the territory of this synod. The process for election and the term of office when not otherwise provided shall be specified in the bylaws. A member of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, unless otherwise elected as a voting member of the Synod Council, may serve as an advisory member of the Synod Council with voice but not vote.
 - b.** The term of office of members of the Synod Council, with the exception of the officers and the youth member, shall be two years.
- S10.01.01.** Unless otherwise elected to sit on the Synod Council, synod representatives on the Church Council and synod representatives on program committees and boards of separately incorporated service units of this church shall be advisory members who will have voice but no vote on the Synod Council.

S10.01.A93. *A designated representative, or in the absence of such designation, the president, of the Lutheran Men in Mission, Southeastern Synod Lutheran Youth Organization, and Southeastern Women of the ELCA, shall have voice but not vote in the meetings of the Synod Council.*

†S10.02. **The Synod Council shall be the board of directors of this synod and shall serve as its interim legislative authority between meetings of the Synod Assembly. It may make decisions which are not in conflict with actions taken by the Synod Assembly or which are not precluded by provisions of this constitution or the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.**

S10.03. **The functions of the Synod Council shall be to:**

- a. **exercise trusteeship responsibilities on behalf of this synod;**
- b. **recommend program goals and budgets to the regular meetings of the Synod Assembly;**
- c. **carry out the resolutions of the Synod Assembly;**
- d. **provide for an annual review of the roster of 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 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and make a report to the Synod Assembly of the Synod Council's actions in this regard;**
- e. **issue letters of call to rostered ministers as authorized by Chapter 7 of the Constitution and Bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America;**
- f. **fill vacancies until the next regular meeting of the Synod Assembly, except as this constitution and its bylaws may otherwise provide, and determine appeals from Executive Committee decisions involving the incapacity of a synod officer as described in provision †S8.56.;**
- g. **report its actions to the regular meetings of the Synod Assembly;**
- h. **establish such committees as it deems necessary, designate the duties of these committees, and receive and act upon the reports and recommendations of these committees.**

S10.03.A92. *It is the policy of this synod to grant to its staff as funds are available,*

- a. *annual cost-of-living raises, and*
- b. *merit increases based on performance evaluations in addition to cost-of-living raises.*

S10.03.01. **The Synod Council shall also:**

- a. **review the structure and operation of the conferences and clusters, determine conference and cluster boundaries, and assign duties and responsibilities to the conferences and clusters;**
- b. **determine the time, place, and agenda for meetings of the Synod Assembly in consultation with officers of this church;**
- c. **approve or disapprove proposed changes in the constitution or other corporate documents for a congregation within 120 days after receipt thereof, and notify the congregation of its decision;**
- d. **hear appeals from any disciplinary action imposed upon a member of a congregation by a Congregation Council;**
- e. **fill vacancies on the Synod Council until the next regular meeting of the Synod Assembly;**
- f. **administer all funds in this synod;**
- g. **make an annual examination of all investments and securities held by this synod;**

- h. promote the interest of this church;
- i. provide for the installation of the officers of this synod; and
- j. perform such other functions as are set forth in the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of this synod, or as may be delegated to it by the Synod Assembly.

S10.03.01.A14 *In addition to carrying out the described duties, responsibilities, and functions of the Synod Council outlined in S10.03 and S10.03.01., members of Synod Council shall:*

- a. *Designate one Synod Council member for each congregation in the Southeastern Synod to make contact and encourage a synodical-congregational relationship through invited visits, Synod Assembly contacts, mission interpretation, and/or other means to provide synodwide information and listen to congregational concerns from leaders and members.*
- b. *Plan, facilitate, and assist in conducting a Southeastern Synod Bishop's Lay Leadership Convocation held annually to support and equip lay congregational leaders of the Southeastern Synod.*
- c. *Work with synod staff in setting short-term and long-term priorities for the mission and ministry of the Southeastern Synod.*
- d. *Participate in succession planning and actively seek and recruit rostered and lay leaders demonstrating potential for conference, synod, and churchwide positions.*
- e. *Guide all actions by prayer, Scripture reading, effective listening, communication with each other, and communication with churchwide, synod, conference, cluster, and congregational leaders and members.*

S10.03.02 When a position on the Synod Council becomes vacant due to the resignation or death of a member or under circumstances not otherwise addressed within the constitution, bylaws, or continuing resolutions, the synod bishop shall nominate an individual to fill the vacant position until the next regular meeting of the Synod Assembly. Such person shall take office immediately upon election by the Synod Council as provided in S10.03.01.e. Such interim service shall not be considered a term for the purposes of bylaw S10.07.22.

S10.03.A90. *Salaries, housing allowances, and benefits for synod personnel shall be determined each year by the Synod Council upon recommendation of the Personnel Committee within the limits of the budget adopted for that year.*

S10.03.B94. *At its regular fall meeting the Synod Council shall offer guidance to the Budget and Finance Committee for formulating the budget.*

S10.04. Reserved.

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

S10.05.01. S10.05. shall not preclude compensation of the bishop or of other officers of this synod if otherwise provided in the constitution, bylaws, or continuing resolutions.

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

S10.06.01. In the event that a member of the Synod Council nominated by a conference ceases to be a member of a congregation within the nominating conference, then such person's position on the Synod Council shall be declared vacant. The conference shall nominate at the next conference assembly a successor to fill the unexpired term. Such person shall take office immediately upon election by the Synod Council as provided in S10.03.01.e. Such interim service shall not be considered a term for the purposes of bylaw S10.07.22.

S10.06.02. A member of Synod Council who is absent from two consecutive Synod Council meetings without excuse shall have the seat declared vacant. The council shall fill the vacancy until the next Synod Assembly.

S10.07. The composition of the Synod Council, the number of members, and the manner of their selection, as well as the

organization of the Synod Council, its additional duties and responsibilities, and the number of meetings to be held each year shall be as set forth in the bylaws.

- S10.07.01.** To the extent permitted by state law, meetings of the Synod Council and its committees may be held electronically or by telephone conference, and notice of all meetings may be provided electronically.
- S10.07.10.** Composition of the Synod Council
- S10.07.11.** The Synod Council shall consist of the officers of the synod and fifteen other members, as follows:
- a. one representative from each conference,
 - b. four members-at-large,
 - c. one youth, and
 - d. one young adult.
- S10.07.12.** Each conference shall nominate one representative to serve on the Synod Council. In order to allow equal representation among lay persons and clergy from the conferences, one half of the Conferences shall nominate a lay representative and one half of the conferences shall nominate a clergy representative. When two terms are completed, whether by the same person or not, those conferences previously nominating lay persons shall nominate clergy, and those conferences previously nominating clergy shall nominate lay persons. Each person so nominated shall be a voting member of a congregation in the nominating conference. No officer of any conference may serve as a member of the Synod Council. Nominations may take place at the Fall or Spring Conference Assembly, shall normally be reported to the synod office at least one week prior to the next Synod Assembly, and are subject to election at the next Synod Assembly. Conference representatives shall take office immediately after the Synod Assembly following election.
- S10.07.13.** Vacant
- S10.07.14.** In the event that any person nominated by a conference is not elected at the Synod Assembly, then the nominating conference shall caucus at the Synod Assembly and nominate another representative for such position. In the event that the nominating conference does not nominate another person who is elected at the Synod Assembly, such position shall be filled in accordance with bylaw S10.03.02. In the event that any person nominated by a conference to fill a vacancy is not elected by the Synod Council, then the nominating conference shall nominate another representative for such position at the next conference assembly.
- S10.07.20.** Term of office and re-election
- S10.07.21.** Synod Council members other than officers shall be elected to two-year terms. The terms of the officers are as described in provision †**S8.51**.
- S10.07.22.** The officers are eligible for re-election as described in provision †**S8.51**. The youth member shall not be eligible for re-election. All other members shall be eligible for re-election; provided, however, such members shall not serve more than two terms consecutively.
- S10.07.30.** Meetings
- S10.07.31.** The Synod Council shall meet at least three times each calendar year.
- S10.07.32.** Any action required or permitted to be taken at any meeting of the Synod Council may be taken without a meeting if a written consent thereto is signed by all members of the Synod Council and each written consent is filed with the minutes of the proceedings of the Synod Council. Any written consent may be executed in any number of counterparts all which taken together shall constitute one and the same consent. Any written consent may be evidenced by receipt of a true copy or facsimile of the consent.
- S10.07.33.** The Synod Council may permit any or all members of the Synod Council to participate in a regular or special meeting by, or conduct the meeting through the use of, any means of communication by which all members of the Synod Council

participating may simultaneously hear each other during the meeting. A member participating in a meeting by this means is deemed to be present in person at the meeting.

S10.07.40. General Provisions

S10.07.41. No person shall serve on more than one of the following committees or councils at any one time: Synod Council, Budget and Finance Committee, Personnel Committee, Synod Assembly Committee, Candidacy Committee, Nominating Committee, and Mutual Ministry Committee.

S10.08. **The primary purposes of electing members-at-large to the Synod Council shall be to:**

- a. promote inclusiveness;**
- b. include those with special talents and/or commitment to this synod and programs that this synod supports; and**
- c. provide a Synod Council which will effectively represent the people of this synod and promote the Statement of Purpose set forth in this constitution.**

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 by-laws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.**

S11.01.10. Constitutional Committees

S11.01.11. Executive Committee

- a. An Executive Committee shall be composed of the bishop, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer of this synod and three members elected by the Synod Council from its membership. The three members elected by the Synod Council shall be elected at the meeting after the annual meeting of the Synod Assembly and shall serve until the next such meeting. Such members may be re-elected.
- b. The vice-president shall chair the Executive Committee.
- c. The secretary shall serve as secretary for the Executive Committee.
- d. This committee shall:
 - 1) assist the bishop in planning, coordinating, and promoting the activities of this synod;
 - 2) recommend to the Synod Council the time and place of the Synod Assembly meetings in consultation with the officers and the Synod Assembly Committee;
 - 3) report its actions to the Synod Council;
 - 4) upon the request of the vice-president, three members of the Synod Executive Committee, or the Synod Council, determine the ability of an officer of this synod to serve as an officer of this synod pursuant to provisions **†S8.54., S8.55., and †S8.56.;**
 - 5) be available to give counsel when disputes arise within this synod; and
 - 6) perform such functions as may be delegated to it by the Synod Assembly or the Synod Council.

S11.01.20. Synod Committees

S11.01.21. Budget and Finance Committee

- a. A Budget and Finance Committee shall be composed of six members elected by and accountable to the Synod Council. Members are elected for two-year terms. No member may serve more than three consecutive terms.
- b. This committee shall:
 - 1) prepare and present a comprehensive income and expense budget to the Synod Council for its consideration and presentation to the Synod Assembly;
 - 2) adhere to the financial reporting system established by this church;
 - 3) create and administer a consistent system of financial reporting from congregations to this synod;
 - 4) provide budgetary and financial advice to institutions related to this synod, upon the request of such institutions;
 - 5) devise and make available an internal audit procedure for organizations, institutions, and congregations of this synod, upon the request of such institutions;
 - 6) secure appropriate legal documentation for the financial and property affairs of this synod;
 - 7) obtain and administer insurance programs for this synod (other than life and health insurance) and assist congregations in securing insurance coverage upon request;
 - 8) serve as a resource for all elements of this synod regarding financial matters; and
 - 9) perform such other duties on financial matters as may be requested.

S11.01.22. Personnel Committee

- a. A Personnel Committee shall be composed of six members elected by and accountable to the Synod Council. Members are elected for two-year terms. No member may serve more than three consecutive terms.
- b. This committee shall:
 - 1) study and recommend to the Synod Council personnel policies for this synod, including salaries and other compensation, pensions and other benefit plans, leave policies, ongoing performance evaluation, and training;
 - 2) develop and recommend to the Synod Council assistance programs and policies for employee grievance procedures; and provide employee services at each synod location;
 - 3) establish and periodically review job descriptions of synod employees;
 - 4) upon approval by the Synod Council, be responsible for the implementation and evaluation of the synod's personnel policies;
 - 5) cause to be maintained personnel records for all employees, including employee performance evaluations;
 - 6) recommend guidelines for personnel policies to congregations of this synod and be available to counsel and advise congregations upon request;
 - 7) when appropriate, work with the Mutual Ministry Committee to offer the most effective support to the officers and staff of this synod.
- c. The policies recommended by this committee shall not conflict with personnel policies established by this church.

S11.01.23. Synod Assembly Committee

- a. A Synod Assembly Committee shall be composed of six members elected by and accountable to the Synod Council. Members are elected for two-year terms. No member may serve more than three consecutive terms.
- b. This committee shall:
 - 1) develop and plan the programs and logistics to all Synod Assemblies;
 - 2) coordinate its Synod Assembly planning with the bishop and all other committees and auxiliaries of this synod;
 - 3) review and coordinate the preparation and distribution of the Pre-Assembly Bulletin;
 - 4) insure that members of the Synod Assembly are elected in accordance with the constitution and by-laws of this synod;
 - 5) develop plans, policies, and procedures for all Synod Assemblies; and
 - 6) report its actions and recommendations to the Synod Council.

S11.01.24. Candidacy Committee

- a. A Candidacy Committee shall be composed of twelve-fifteen members elected by and accountable to the Synod Council. Members shall be limited to six-year terms with two-three persons to be elected each year. Members shall not be eligible for re-election to consecutive terms.
- b. This committee shall:
 - 1) be responsible for the evaluation, guidance, and approval of candidates within this synod who seek to be ordained ministers or associates in ministry;
 - 2) develop and oversee the procedures for evaluation and guidance of these candidates;
 - 3) encourage financial support for these candidates;
 - 4) coordinate the evaluation, guidance, and approval activities of this synod with other expressions of this church, especially with the Domestic Mission unit of this church;
 - 5) oversee and distribute the scholarship resources of this synod to candidates for ministry, except for the Kessler Scholarship Fund;
 - 6) coordinate the ministry preparation efforts of this synod with the seminaries in which the candidates are enrolled;
 - 7) coordinate efforts to support the seminaries that relate to this synod, in cooperation with the other supporting synods of the seminaries;
 - 8) report its activities to the Synod Assembly and the conferences of this synod.

S11.01.25. Nominating Committee

- a. A Nominating Committee shall be composed of six members elected by and accountable to the Synod Council. Members are elected for two-year terms. No member may serve more than three consecutive terms.
- b. This committee shall:
 - 1) provide the process for nominations and elections to be carried out by the Synod Assembly; and
 - 2) create and administer an inclusiveness grid system to insure that the elections carried out at all levels of this synod

are in compliance with provision †S6.04.

- c. This synod shall provide staff support services to this committee.

S11.01.30. Synod Assembly Committees

S11.01.32. Reference and Counsel Committee

- a. A Reference and Counsel Committee shall be composed of six members elected by the Synod Council. Members are elected for two-year terms. No member may serve more than three consecutive terms. The Synod Council shall elect committee members from among the membership of the synod.
- b. This committee shall
 - 1) receive, review, and recommend action on motions and proposed resolutions submitted to the Synod Assembly for consideration; and
 - 2) be available to the bishop and voting members for consultation and assistance in preparing resolutions for actions by the Synod Assembly.

S11.01.32.A12 *Resolutions must be submitted to the synod office by 5 pm on the Friday that precedes by three weeks the start of a synod assembly, in order to be considered by that assembly's Committee on Reference and Counsel. Resolutions submitted after this deadline will not be considered unless the issue is of such an immediate and urgent nature that it clearly cannot be postponed until the next assembly, as determined by either the Committee on Reference and Counsel or the Synod Council.*

S11.01.33. Credentials Committee

- a. A Credentials Committee shall be composed of six members elected by the Synod Council. A single term for such members shall be no longer than one year. No member may serve more than three consecutive terms. The Synod Council shall elect committee members from among the membership of the next following Synod Assembly to serve on this committee.
- b. This committee shall:
 - 1) report the official attendance at the Synod Assembly by category, i.e., ministers of Word and Sacrament, lay persons (including ministers of Word and Service), visitors, and other categories that may be required by the Synod Assembly;
 - 2) recommend to the Synod Assembly that the delegation is properly constituted and may be seated; and
 - 3) be responsible for the work of the registration task force of the Synod Assembly.

S11.01.34. Elections Committee

- a. An Elections Committee shall be composed of six members elected by the Synod Council. A single term for such members shall be no longer than one year. No member may serve more than three consecutive terms. The Synod Council shall elect committee members from among the membership of the next following Synod Assembly to serve on this committee.
- b. This committee shall:
 - 1) assure that ballots are prepared for all persons nominated for positions to be filled by election by the Synod Assembly;
 - 2) be responsible for distributing, collecting, and counting ballots; and
 - 3) convey the results of each election in detail to the Synod Assembly chairperson.

S11.01.35. Minutes Committee

- a. A Minutes Committee shall be composed of six members elected by the Synod Council. A single term for such members shall be no longer than one year. No member may serve more than three consecutive terms. The Synod Council shall elect committee members from among the membership of the next following Synod Assembly to serve on this committee.
- b. This committee shall:
 - 1) assist the secretary in preparing an accurate report of events and actions taken by the Synod Assembly;
 - 2) within 30 days after the Synod Assembly adjourns, review and approve the minutes before distribution.
- c. This committee shall work under the supervision of the synod secretary.

S11.01.40. Other Committees

S11.01.40.B17. *Kessler Scholarship Committee. A Kessler Scholarship Committee shall be composed of three members elected by and accountable to the Synod Council. Two members shall be active lay members of Southeastern Synod congregations and one member shall be a minister of Word and Sacrament rostered in the Southeastern Synod. At least one but no more than two persons shall be members of the Synod's Candidacy Committee. Members are elected for two-year terms. No member may serve more than three consecutive terms. This committee shall:*

- a. *Implement policies approved by the Synod Council for annually awarding one or more scholarships from the synod's Richard C. Kessler Scholarship Fund.*
- b. *Periodically review policies for administering this scholarship fund and forward any recommendations for changes to the Synod Council for its consideration.*

S11.01.40.C09. *Compensation Guidelines Committee. A Compensation Guidelines Committee shall be composed of five members elected by and accountable to the Synod Council. Members are elected for three-year terms, with initial terms staggered. No member may serve more than two consecutive terms. This committee shall:*

- a. *Make recommendations to the Synod Council about the content of a Compensation Guidelines document, with such recommendations to be made at each January synod council meeting for a document to be subsequently presented for approval at the next Synod Assembly;*
- b. *Address within the recommended document all aspects of compensation for rostered leaders in ways that are relevant, current, and equitable to both the individuals and the congregations, agencies, and institutions to which they are called;*
- c. *Address within the recommended document elements that may provide encouragement and support for rostered leaders to maintain healthy lifestyles and to pursue continued growth in education and studies.*

S11.01.40.D10. *Mission Outreach and Renewal Committee. A Mission Outreach and Renewal Committee shall be composed of eight members elected by and accountable to the Synod Council. Members are elected for two-year terms. No member may serve more than three consecutive terms. This committee shall:*

- a. *Develop and implement synod mission strategies;*
- b. *Identify new mission fields and potential congregations for renewal;*
- c. *Develop mission partnerships;*
- d. *Train and support missional leaders;*
- e. *Develop and implement ethnic-specific and multicultural mission strategies.*

S11.01.40.E10. *Youth Ministry Team. A committee known as the Youth Ministry Team shall be composed of ten members elected by and accountable to the Synod Council. At least one member shall be a youth and at least one member shall be a young adult. Members are elected for one-year terms. No member may serve more than three consecutive terms. This committee shall:*

- a. Develop a long-term vision for synod youth and young adult ministries and, in collaboration with synod staff working in these areas, develop plans to implement the long-term vision.*
- b. Annually determine funding needs and available resources for synod youth and young adult ministries and report these to the Budget and Finance Committee and Synod Council.*
- c. Serve as a resource for congregations, conferences, and synod events focused on youth or young adult ministries.*

S11.01.40.F10. *Campus Ministry Team. A committee known as the Campus Ministry Team shall be composed of eight members elected by and accountable to the Synod Council. Members are elected for two-year terms. No member may serve more than two consecutive terms. This committee shall assist in developing, maintaining, and promoting the ministry of the ELCA among students, staff, and faculty on colleges within this synod. With the concurrence of the synod bishop, campus pastors or other representatives from campus ministry programs may serve as consultants to the Campus Ministry Team. Such consultants shall have voice but not vote at Team meetings.*

S11.01.40.G14. *Global Mission Committee. A Global Mission Committee shall be composed of five members elected by and accountable to the Synod Council. Members are elected for two-year terms. No member may serve more than three consecutive terms. This committee shall:*

- a. Foster positive relationships with this synod's companion synods;*
- b. Seek to generate interest in and commitment to this synod's wider involvement in the ELCA's global mission work.*

S11.01.40.H16 *Disaster Ministry Committee. A Disaster Ministry Committee shall be composed of nine members elected by and accountable to the Synod Council. Members are elected for three-year terms. This committee prepares for and responds to disasters within the synod. It reviews and makes recommendations for changes to the Synod Disaster Plan. It educates and maintains a roster of volunteer disaster coordinators to assist in congregational preparedness and response. It also shall educate synod members about disaster preparation and encourage preparation in congregations. As appropriate, it shall work with other agencies and institutions.*

S11.01.50. Task Forces

S11.01.51. The bishop or the Synod Council may create task forces from time to time. Task forces are intended to be ad hoc groupings of individuals who work toward a common goal. If, when created, a task force is intended to exist for longer than a two year period, then the Synod Council shall memorialize the task force as a committee in a continuing resolution. If created by the bishop, the identity, purpose, membership, term of membership, and internal organization of the task force shall be identified to the Synod Council at its next regular meeting. A task force may exist only so long as the Synod Council does not object to its existence and mission. The bishop or the Synod Council may appoint members to, and remove members from, task forces from time to time. No member of a task force may serve more than two years without the express approval of either the bishop or the Synod Council. For the purposes of the bylaws and continuing resolutions of this synod, task forces are not included within the meaning of "committees."

S11.01.60. Other Organizational Units

S11.01.61. There may be other organizational units for such purposes as the synod may from time to time determine.

S11.01.61.A12. *Worship Ministries Team. A Worship Ministries Team shall be appointed by and accountable to the bishop and ratified by the synod council. Members usually serve two-year renewable terms. This team shall:*

- a. Plan worship for synod assemblies and synod-sponsored continuing education events;*
- b. Coordinate worship within this synod for special services.*

c. Provide workshops and other opportunities for worship education for lay and rostered persons.

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

S11.02.01. The Consultation Committee of this synod shall consist of 12 persons, of whom six shall be ministers of Word and Sacrament and six shall be lay persons.

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

†S11.04. **A 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 be composed of 6 members nominated by the Bishop and the Vice President and appointed by the Executive Committee.

S11.04.02. This Committee shall:

a. seek to support the officers and the rostered and administrative staff of this synod by demonstrating concern for their spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being and by offering support when they are experiencing personal or pastoral stress; and

b. be receptive to any communication concerning attitudes and conditions within this synod; and

c. provide a forum where such concerns may be discussed in a helpful and, when necessary, in a confidential manner.

S11.04.03. This committee shall, when appropriate, work with the Personnel Committee to offer effective support to the officers and staff of this synod.

S11.04.04. The policies recommended by this committee shall not conflict with the policies established by this church.

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

S11.05.A09. The Audit Committee in this synod shall consist of five persons.

S11.06. **There may be an organization for women, an organization for men, an organization for youth, and such other organizations as this synod may from time to time determine. The duties, functions, and composition of such organizations shall be set forth as in the by-laws and shall be subject to any applicable provisions or requirements of the constitution and bylaws of the ELCA. The organizations created under the authority of this provision are in addition to any organizations prescribed by this church.**

S11.06.10. Southeastern Lutheran Holding Corporation

- a. The Synod Council shall elect a board of directors to the Southeastern Lutheran Holding Corporation, a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Southeastern Synod of the ELCA.
- b. The Southeastern Lutheran Holding Corporation shall report its activities to the Synod Council.

S11.10. General Provisions

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

S11.11.01 The provisions of S11.11 are equally applicable to task forces.

S11.11.02. General provisions regarding committees

S11.11.02.A09. In order to avoid any potential conflict of interest, persons elected or appointed to a committee identified in S11.01.20 shall not be members of boards of directors or staffs of congregations, organizations, or agencies which derive financial support from such committee.

S11.04.11. Unless otherwise provided, members of committees shall be elected to two-year terms. No member may serve more than three consecutive terms.

S11.04.11.A90. Terms on Synod Committees begin and end at the conclusion of the Synod Assembly.

S11.04.12. Each committee and task force shall be responsible for its own internal organization and shall strive to meet at least twice per year.

S11.04.13. Each committee and task force shall be responsible to the Synod Council and shall report its activities to the Synod Council.

S11.04.14. Should any member of a committee die, resign, or be unable to serve, the bishop may appoint an interim member to serve on such committee for the unexpired term.

**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 partners as specified in the bylaws and continuing resolutions. The purpose of such groupings shall be to foster interdependent relationships for missional purposes among congregations, synods, the churchwide organization, and other partners.

S12.01.10. Conferences

S12.01.11. The congregations of this synod shall be grouped into the conferences described below. All references to cities refer to the metropolitan areas of such cities, except as expressly provided otherwise.

- a. Conference 1. East Georgia from Augusta to the Georgia coast.
- b. Conference 2. Southern Georgia from outside I-285, including Macon and Valdosta.
- c. Conference 3. Inside I-285.
- d. Conference 4. Northeast Georgia from outside of I-285, including Elberton and Hartwell.

- e. Conference 5. Northwest Georgia.
- f. Conference 6. East Tennessee from Chattanooga to Bristol, TN
- g. Conference 7. Alabama, from Montgomery northward
- h. Conference 8. Middle Tennessee, Memphis, and Tupelo
- i. Conference 9. Jackson, MS, Dothan and Mobile, AL, and congregations southward

S12.01.12. The Synod Council shall determine the specific conference geographic boundaries. The Synod Council shall also assign duties and responsibilities to the conferences and review conference programs and activities.

S12.01.13. The conference assemblies shall meet at least once a year and shall include the congregational voting members to the Synod Assembly and a youth. The conference council shall determine the voting membership of the conference assembly.

***S12.01.13.A09** Conferences are the principal means through which inter-congregational worship, education, and ministry are provided, and its functioning is an important means through which congregations and their members feel a part of and supported by this church. Conferences are encouraged to have at least one event per year that incorporates education and worship for its member congregations.*

S12.01.14. The conference assembly shall elect a chairperson, a vice chairperson, a secretary, and if needed a treasurer. Either the chairperson or the vice chairperson shall be a lay person, but not both. The conference officers shall serve for a two-year term and be eligible to serve for one additional consecutive term. The chairperson of the conference shall serve as a liaison between the conference and the bishop.

S12.01.15. The conference assembly shall nominate one person to serve on the Synod Council as described in bylaw S10.07.12.

S12.01.16. Nominations from conferences to the Synod Council or any committees may take place at the Fall or Spring Conference Assembly, with the persons elected to take office immediately after the next Synod Assembly.

S12.01.17. Each conference shall have a conference council. The conference council shall be composed of conference officers, the conference representatives to the synod committees, the conference representative to the Synod Council, and a youth member of the conference assembly. The youth member shall serve a one year term and is eligible for re-election provided however, no person shall be elected to the youth position who cannot complete his or her term prior to graduation from high school. Each conference council shall nominate board members to serve on statewide agencies and organizations at the request of the Synod Council.

S12.01.18. Each conference shall:

- a. identify needs of congregations within the conference and develop programs in consultation with the synod/region to fulfill those needs;
- b. provide opportunities that will quicken and deepen the spiritual life of clergy and laity;
- c. cultivate Christian fellowship among congregations;
- d. develop and share administrative methods that will help solve parish problems;
- e. serve as a working unit of this synod for the purposes of planning, promoting, and implementing the mission of this church;
- f. facilitate multi-congregational ministry and service within and across conference and synod boundaries;
- g. promote the formation of and provide support and assistance to coalitions;
- h. assist congregations and professional leaders in fulfilling their responsibilities to this synod; and

- i. receive and review progress reports from synod committees, task forces, boards, agencies, etc., to which the conference elects members.

S12.01.19. Each congregation shall establish a relationship with the conference in which it is located. Border area congregations may change their conference relationship upon approval of the Synod Council.

S12.01.20. Reserved

S12.01.30. Clusters

S12.01.31. This synod shall create clusters. All rostered persons of this synod shall be a member of a cluster. The number of clusters shall be determined by the Synod Council from time to time, in light of having sufficient numbers of persons to provide mutual support and few enough members to develop close, interpersonal relationships.

S12.01.31.A09 This synod contemplates that there will be approximately two clusters for every conference, but cluster membership will not be limited by any corresponding membership in a particular conference.

S12.01.32. Each cluster shall:

- a. provide support and encouragement to members of the cluster and their family members;
- b. provide opportunities that will quicken and deepen the spiritual life of members of the cluster;
- c. promote the creation of relationships and cultivate Christian fellowship among members of the cluster;
- d. perform tasks and responsibilities that may be assigned to the cluster by the bishop or the Synod Council;
- e. provide support the ministry of the members of the cluster;
- f. allow a forum for addressing problems or challenges that impact members of the cluster;
- g. develop and share administrative methods that will help solve parish problems; and
- h. facilitate multi-congregational ministry and service within and across conference and synod boundaries.

S12.01.32.A09 The roles of clusters and conferences may overlap, and members of clusters and conferences shall work together to complement rather than compete with each other. In the event that the roles of the applicable cluster and conference cannot be resolved, then the cluster and conference shall submit the dispute to the bishop for resolution.

S12.01.33. The bishop shall appoint a cluster dean for a term of two years, except that the term shall automatically expire upon the termination of the appointing bishop's term of office. A cluster dean may be re-appointed without limitation.

S12.01.34. The cluster dean shall:

- a. serve as the communication link between the bishop and the cluster;
- b. provide pastoral care and consultation to congregations, rostered leaders, and their families;
- c. at the bishop's request, represent the bishop and this synod at churchwide, synodical, conference, cluster, coalition, and congregational worship services and special events (e.g., conference assemblies, call committee meetings, installations, groundbreaking, dedications, funerals, and agency meetings); and
- d. at the bishop's request, represent the bishop and this synod at ecumenical events and meetings.

S12.01.35. The cluster dean is encouraged to enlist others to assist in the tasks of the office.

S12.01.40. Coalitions

- S12.01.41.** Groupings of congregations and interested members of congregations, either within or across conference or synod boundaries, are an essential part of carrying out the mission of this synod. Therefore, the bishop shall, subject to the approval of the Synod Council, facilitate the creation of coalitions to assist with local needs and ministry opportunities.
- S12.01.42.** Coalitions may also be created by conferences, clusters, or groups of congregations, either within or across conference or synod boundaries, except that the formation, membership, membership term, organization, purpose, and activities shall be promptly provided to the bishop, together with any other information requested by the bishop or the Synod Council. The bishop shall regularly report to the Synod Council the reports of all coalitions. No coalition may continue to exist if such coalition is objected to by the Synod Council or if such coalition does not disclose its activities to the bishop.

Chapter 13. CONGREGATIONS

- †S13.01.** Each congregation, except those certified as congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America by the uniting churches, prior to being listed in the register of congregations of this synod, shall adopt the Model Constitution for Congregations or one acceptable to this synod, which is not in contradiction to the constitution and bylaws of the ELCA.
- a. New Congregations.** A congregation newly formed by this church and any congregation seeking recognition and reception by this church shall:
- 1) Accept the criteria for recognition and reception as a congregation of this church, fulfill the functions of the congregation, and accept the governance provisions as provided in Chapter 9 of the ELCA constitution and bylaws.**
 - 2) Adopt governing documents that include fully and with out alterations the Preamble, Chapter 1, where applicable, and all required provisions of Chapters 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 15, 16, 17, and 18 in the Model Constitution for Congregations consistent with requirements of this church. Bylaws and continuing resolutions, appropriate for inclusion in these chapters and not in conflict with these required provisions in the Model Constitution for Congregations, the constitution of this synod, or the Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, may be adopted as described in Chapters 16 and 18 of the Model Constitution for Congregations.**
 - 3) Accept the commitments expected of all congregations of the ELCA as stated in C6.01., C6.02., and C6.03. of the Model Constitution for Congregations.**
- b. Congregations from another church body.** If a congregation is a member of another church body, the leaders of the congregation first should consult with the appropriate authorities of that church body before taking action to leave its current church body. After such consultation, leaders of the congregation should make contact with the ELCA synod bishop or staff where the congregation is located.
- c. Recognition and reception.** Recognition and reception into this church of transferring or independent congregations by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is based on the judgment of the synod and action by the synod through the Synod Council and Synod Assembly. The synod bishop shall provide for prompt reporting of such additions to the secretary of this church for addition to the register of congregations.
- †S13.02.** It shall be the responsibility of each congregation of this synod annually to choose from among its voting members lay-persons to serve as members of the Synod Assembly as well as persons to represent it at meetings of any conference, cluster, coalition, or other area subdivision of which it is a member. The number of persons to be elected by each congregation and other qualifications shall be prescribed in the guidelines established by this synod.
- S13.11.** When a rostered minister resigns, the Congregation Council shall receive the letter of resignation, report it to the congregation, and at once notify the bishop of this synod.
- S13.12.** A congregation under financial obligation to its former rostered minister shall make satisfactory settlement of the obligation before calling a successor.

- †S13.19. A congregation considering a relocation shall confer with the bishop of the synod in which it is territorially located and the appropriate unit of the churchwide organization before any steps are taken leading to such action. The approval of the Synod Council shall be received before any such action is effected.
- †S13.20. A congregation considering development of an additional site to be used regularly for worship shall confer with the bishop of the synod in which it is territorially located and the appropriate unit of the churchwide organization before any steps are taken leading to such action.
- S13.21. The alignment of congregations in pastoral charges, and all alterations in any alignment, shall be subject to approval by the Synod Council.
- †S13.22. Each congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America within the territory of this synod, except those which are in partnership with the Slovak Zion Synod, shall establish and maintain a relationship with this synod.
- †S13.23. Provision 9.71. of the ELCA Constitution shall govern the relationship of this synod and a congregation of this synod regarding the property of the congregation. This synod may transfer or convey property to a congregation of this synod, subject to restrictions accepted by the congregation, including provision that if the Synod Council, in its sole and exclusive discretion, determines (1) that the property is not being used to serve the mission and ministry needs of this church, or (2) that the congregation has transferred, encumbered, mortgaged, or in any way burdened or impaired any right, title, or interest in the property without the prior approval of the Synod Council, then title to the property shall revert to the synod, and the congregation, upon written demand, shall reconvey the property to the synod.
- S13.24. If any congregation of this synod has disbanded, or if the members of a congregation agree that it is no longer possible for it to function as such, or if it is the opinion of the Synod Council that the membership of a congregation has become so scattered or so diminished in numbers as to make it impractical for such a congregation to fulfill the purposes for which it was organized or that it is necessary for this synod to protect the congregation's property from waste and deterioration, the Synod Council, itself or through trustees elected by it, may take charge and control of the property of the congregation to hold, manage, and convey the same on behalf of this synod. The congregation shall have the right to appeal the decision to the Synod Assembly.
- S13.25. This synod may temporarily assume administration of a congregation upon its request or with its concurrence.
- S13.30. Discipline
- †S13.31. Congregations and members of congregations are subject to discipline in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 20 of the ELCA constitution and bylaws.
- S13.40. Synodically Authorized Worshiping Communities
- S13.41. Authorized worshiping communities, acknowledged under criteria, policies, and procedures approved by the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, shall accept and adhere to the Confession of Faith and Statement of Purpose of this church, shall be served by leadership under the criteria of this church, and shall be subject to the discipline of this church.

Chapter 14. ROSTERED MINISTERS

- S14.10. Ministers of Word and Sacrament
- †S14.11. The time and place of the ordination of those persons properly called to congregations or non-congregational service of this synod shall be authorized by the bishop of this synod.
- †S14.12. Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,
- a. Every minister of Word and Sacrament shall:

- 1) preach the Word;
- 2) administer the sacraments;
- 3) conduct public worship;
- 4) provide pastoral care;
- 5) seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel;
- 6) impart knowledge of this church and its wider ministry through distribution of its communications and publications;
- 7) witness to the Kingdom of God in the community, in the nation and abroad; and
- 8) speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, calling for justice and proclaiming God's love for the world.

b. Each pastor with a congregational call shall, within the congregation:

- 1) offer instruction, confirm, marry, visit the sick and distressed, and bury the dead;
- 2) relate to all schools and organizations of the congregation;
- 3) install regularly elected members of the Congregation Council; and
- 4) with the council, administer discipline.
- 5) endeavor to increase the support given by the congregation to the work of the ELCA churchwide organization and of this synod.

S14.13. The pastor shall keep accurate parochial records of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, communicants, members received, members dismissed, and members excluded from the congregation, and shall submit a summary of such statistics annually to this synod. The pastor shall become a member of the congregation that has extended the letter of call. In a parish of multiple congregations, the pastor shall hold membership in one of the congregations.

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

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

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

- a. Each congregation of this synod shall consult the bishop before taking any steps leading to extending a call to a prospective pastor.
- b. For issuance of a letter of call to a pastor or pastoral candidate by a congregation of this synod in accord with ELCA constitutional provision 7.41., a two-thirds vote shall be required of voting members of the congregation present and voting at a meeting regularly called for the purpose of issuing such a call.
- c. When a 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 to a congregation of this synod without first conferring

with the bishop. A minister of Word and Sacrament shall respond with an answer of acceptance or declination to a letter of call within thirty days after receipt of such call. In exceptional circumstances with the approval of the bishop and the chair 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 death or, following consultation with the synodical bishop and for the following reasons:
 - 1) mutual agreement to terminate the call or the completion of a call for a specific term;
 - 2) resignation of a pastor, which shall become effective, unless otherwise agreed, no later than 30 days after the date on which it was submitted;
 - 3) inability to conduct the pastoral office effectively in that congregation in view of local conditions;
 - 4) physical disability or mental incapacity of the pastor;
 - 5) suspension of the pastor through discipline for more than three months;
 - 6) resignation or removal of the pastor from the roster of ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church;
 - 7) termination of the relationship between this church and the congregation;
 - 8) dissolution of the congregation or the termination of a parish arrangement; or
 - 9) suspension of the congregation through discipline for more than six months.
 - b. When allegations of physical disability or mental incapacity of the pastor under paragraph a.4) above, or ineffective conduct of the pastoral office under paragraph a.3) above, have come to the attention of the bishop of this synod,
 - 1) the bishop in his or her sole discretion may investigate such conditions personally together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson, or
 - 2) when such allegations have been brought to the synod's attention by an official recital of allegations by the congregation council or by a petition signed by at least one-third of the voting members of the congregation, the bishop personally shall investigate such conditions together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson.
 - c. In case of alleged physical disability or mental incapacity under paragraph a.4) above, the bishop's committee shall obtain and document competent medical opinion concerning the pastor's condition. When a disability or incapacity is evident to the committee, the bishop of this synod may declare the pastorate vacant. When the pastorate is declared vacant, the Synod Council shall list the pastor on the roster of ministers of Word and Sacrament as disabled. Upon removal of the disability and restoration of the pastor to health, the bishop shall take steps to enable the pastor to resume the ministry, either in the congregation last served or in another appropriate call.
 - d. In the case of alleged local difficulties that imperil the effective functioning of the congregation under paragraph a.3) above, the bishop's committee shall endeavor to hear from all concerned persons, after which the bishop together with the committee shall present their recommendations first to the pastor and then to the congregation. The recommendations of the bishop's committee must address whether the pastor's call should come to an end and, if so, may suggest appropriate severance arrangements. The committee may also propose other actions that should be undertaken by the congregation and by the pastor, if appropriate. If the pastor and 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, if there is no duly called pastor, then by the transition pastor in consultation with the Congregation Council.

S14.20. Vacant

†S14.21. The parochial records of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, communicants, members received, members transferred or dismissed, members who have become inactive, or members excluded from the congregation shall be kept accurately and permanently. They shall remain the property of each congregation. At the time of the closure of a congregation, such records shall be sent to the regional archives. The secretary of the congregation shall attest to the bishop that such records have been placed in his/her hands in good order by a departing pastor before:

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

†S14.22. The pastor shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to a former congregation before:

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

†S14.23. During service to a congregation, an interim pastor shall have the rights and duties in the congregation of a regularly called pastor. The interim pastor may delegate the same in part to an interim supply pastor with the consent of the bishop of this synod. The interim pastor and any rostered minister who may assist shall refrain from exerting influence in the selection of a pastor. Upon completion of service, the interim pastor shall certify to the bishop of this synod that the parochial records, for the period for which the interim pastor was responsible, are in order.

S14.23.A17. Interim pastors and other ministers of Word and Sacrament who assist a congregation during a pastoral vacancy shall not be candidates for the call process in that congregation except when approved by the Bishop in special circumstances.

†S14.24. With the approval of the 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 provision †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 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 provision †S14.18.

S14.25. All ministers of Word and Sacrament under a call shall attend meetings of the Synod Assembly, and the pastors of congregations shall also attend the meetings of the conference, cluster, coalition, or other area subdivision to which the congregation belongs.

S14.25.A17. Ministers of Word and Sacrament under a call who will be absent for all or part of the Synod Assembly shall submit an excuse in writing to the Credentials Committee prior to the absence, or within one week following the absence.

S14.30. Ministers of Word and Service

- †S14.31. The time and place of the consecration of those persons properly called to congregations or non-congregational service of this synod shall be authorized by the bishop of this synod.
- †S14.32. Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, every Minister of Word and Service shall:
- a. Be rooted in the Word of God, for proclamation and service;
 - b. Advocate a prophetic diakonia that commits itself to risk-taking and innovative service on the frontiers of the Church's outreach, giving particular attention to the suffering places in God's world;
 - c. Speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, calling for justice and proclaiming God's love for the world, witnessing to the realm of God in the community, the nation, and abroad;
 - d. Equip the baptized for ministry in God's world that affirms the gifts of all people;
 - e. Encourage mutual relationships that invite participation and accompaniment of others in God's mission;
 - f. Practice stewardship that respects God's gift of time, talents, and resources;
 - g. Be grounded in a gathered community for ongoing diaconal formation;
 - h. Share knowledge of the ELCA and its wider ministry of the gospel, and advocate for the work of all expressions of this church; and
 - i. Identify and encourage qualified persons to prepare for ministry of the gospel.
- S14.33. The minister of Word and Service shall become a member of the congregation upon receipt and acceptance of the letter of call. In a parish of multiple congregations, the minister of Word and Service shall hold membership in one of the congregations.
- S14.34. Each minister of Word and Service on the roster of this synod shall submit a report of his or her ministry to the bishop of the synod at least 90 days prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.
- †S14.41. When a congregation of this church desires to call a minister of Word and Service or a candidate for the ministry of Word and Service of this church:
- a. Each congregation of this synod shall consult the bishop of this synod before taking any steps leading to the extending of a call to a prospective minister of Word and Service.
 - b. For issuance of a letter of call to a minister of Word and Service or candidate by a congregation of this synod in accord with ELCA constitutional provision 7.71., a two-thirds vote shall be required of members of the congregation present and voting at a meeting regularly called for the purpose of issuing such a call.
 - c. When the congregation has voted to issue a call to a prospective minister of Word and Service, the letter of call shall be submitted to the bishop of this synod for the bishop's signature.
- S14.42. No minister of Word and Service shall accept a call without first conferring with the bishop of this synod. A minister of Word and Service shall respond with an answer of acceptance or declination to a letter of call within 30 days of receipt of such call. In exceptional circumstances with the approval of the bishop of this synod and the chair of the Congregation Council of the congregation issuing the call, an additional 15 days may be granted to respond to a letter of call.
- †S14.43. a. The call of a congregation, when accepted by a minister of Word and Service, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment which shall be terminated only by death or, following consultation with the synodical bishop, for the following reasons:
- 1) mutual agreement to terminate the call or the completion of a call for a specific term;
 - 2) resignation of the minister of Word and Service, which shall become effective, unless otherwise agreed, no later than 30 days after the date on which it was submitted;
 - 3) inability to conduct the office effectively in that congregation in view of local conditions;
 - 4) physical disability or mental incapacity of the minister of Word and Service;
 - 5) suspension of the minister of Word and Service through discipline for more than three months;
 - 6) resignation or removal of the minister of Word and Service from the roster of ministers of Word and Service of this church;
 - 7) termination of the relationship between this church and the congregation;
 - 8) dissolution of the congregation or the termination of a parish arrangement; or
 - 9) suspension of the congregation through discipline for more than six months.

- b. When allegations of physical disability or mental incapacity of the minister of Word and Service under paragraph a.4) above, or ineffective conduct of the ministry of Word and Service under paragraph a.3) above, have come to the attention of the bishop of this synod,
 - 1) the bishop in his or her sole discretion may investigate such conditions personally together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson, or
 - 2) when such allegations have been brought to the synod's attention by an official recital of allegations by the Congregation Council or by a petition signed by at least one-third of the voting members of the congregation, the bishop personally shall investigate such conditions together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson.
- c. In case of alleged physical disability or mental incapacity under paragraph a.4) above, the bishop's committee shall obtain and document competent medical opinion concerning the minister of Word and Service's condition. When a disability or incapacity is evident to the committee, the bishop of this synod may declare the position vacant and the minister of Word and Service shall be listed on the roster of ministers of Word and Service as disabled. Upon removal of the disability and restoration of the minister of Word and Service to health, the bishop shall take steps to enable the minister of Word and Service to resume the ministry, either in the congregation last served or in another appropriate call.
- d. In the case of alleged local difficulties that imperil the effective functioning of the congregation under paragraph a.3) above, the bishop's committee shall endeavor to hear from all concerned persons, after which the bishop together with the committee shall present their recommendations first to the minister of Word and Service and then to the congregation. The recommendations of the bishop's committee address whether the minister of Word and Service's call should come to an end and, if so, may suggest appropriate severance arrangements. The committee may also propose other actions that should be undertaken by the congregation and by the minister of Word and Service, if appropriate. If the minister of Word and Service and congregation agree to carry out such recommendations, no further action need be taken by the synod.
- e. If either party fails to assent to the recommendations of the bishop's committee concerning the minister of Word and Service's call, the congregation may dismiss the minister of Word and Service only at a legally called meeting after consultation with the bishop, either (a) by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee did not recommend termination of the call, or (b) by a majority vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee recommended termination of the call.
- f. If, in the course of proceedings described in paragraph c. or paragraph d. above, the bishop's committee concludes that there may be grounds for disciplinary action, the committee shall make recommendations concerning disciplinary action in accordance with the provisions of this church's constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.

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

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

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

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

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

S14.47.A17. *Ministers of Word and Service under a call who will be absent for all or part of the Synod Assembly shall submit an excuse in writing to the Credentials Committee prior to the absence, or within one week following the absence.*

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 organization are interdependent units that share responsibility in God's mission, all share in the responsibility to develop, implement, and strengthen the financial support program of the whole church. The gifts and offerings of the members of ELCA are given to support all parts of this church and thus partnership in this church should be evidenced in determining each part's share of the gifts and offerings. Therefore:
- a. The mission of this church beyond the congregation is to be supported by such a proportionate share of each congregation's annual budget as each congregation determines. This synod shall develop guidelines for determining "proportionate share," and shall consult with congregational leaders to assist each congregation in making its determination.
 - b. This synod shall receive the proportionate share of the mission support from its congregations, and shall transmit that percentage or amount of each congregation's mission support as determined in consultation with the churchwide organization and approved by the Synod Assembly as part of its budget consideration.
 - c. Should the Synod Assembly not approve the proportionate share of mission support determined in consultation with the churchwide organization, a new consultation with the churchwide organization shall take place. The Synod Council is authorized to amend the budget adopted by the Synod Assembly to reflect the results of this consultation.
- †S15.12. The annual budget of this synod shall reflect the entire range of its own activities and its commitment to partnership funding with other synods and the churchwide organization.
- S15.13. On the basis of estimated income, the Synod Council shall authorize expenditures within the budget for the fiscal year. Expenditure authorizations shall be subject to revision, in light of changing conditions, by the Synod Council.
- S15.14. Except when such procedure would jeopardize current operations, a reserve amounting to no more than 16 percent of the sum of the amounts scheduled in the next year's budget for regular distribution to synodical causes shall be carried forward annually for disbursement in the following year in the interest of making possible a more even flow of income to such causes. The exact number of dollars to be held in reserve shall be determined by the Synod Council.
- S15.21. No appeal to congregations of this or any other synod of this church 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. The financial reports shall be in the format approved from time to time by the Office of the Treasurer.
- †S15.32. This synod shall maintain adequate, continuous insurance coverage in accordance with standards recommended by the churchwide organization. Insurance programs offered or endorsed by the churchwide organization shall be deemed to fulfill this obligation.

Chapter 16.
INDEMNIFICATION

- †S16.01. Subject to the limitations and duties imposed by law, each person who is or was made or threatened to be made a party to any proceeding by reason of the present or former capacity of that person as a Synod Council member, officer, employee, or committee member of this synod shall be indemnified against all costs and expenses incurred

by that person in connection with the proceeding. Indemnification of any person by reason of that person's capacity as a director, officer, or employee, or committee member of any other organization, regardless of its form or relationship to this synod, is subject to the provisions of section †S16.02.

- a. The term “proceeding” means a threatened, pending, or completed lawsuit, whether civil or criminal, an administrative or investigative matter, arbitration, mediation, alternative dispute resolution, or any other similar legal or governmental action. Except as otherwise required by law, the term “proceeding” does not include (a) any action by this synod against the individual seeking indemnification, or (b) subject to †S16.04., a disciplinary hearing or related process described in Chapter 20 of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*.
- b. The term “indemnification” includes reimbursement and advances of costs and expenses for judgments, penalties, fines, settlements, excise taxes, reasonable attorneys’ fees, disbursements, and similar required expenditures.

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

S16.02.01. If any term, covenant, condition, sentence, or portion of a sentence of provisions †S16.01. or †S16.02. , or the application thereof to any person or circumstances shall to any extent, be invalid or unenforceable, the remainder of provisions †S16.01. or †S16.02., or the application of such terms, covenants, conditions, sentences, or portions of a sentence to persons or circumstances other than those as to which it is held invalid or unenforceable, shall not be affected thereby and each term, covenant, condition, sentence or portion of a sentence of provisions †S16.01. or †S16.02. shall be valid and be enforced to the fullest extent permitted by law.

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

†S16.04. When written charges against a rostered minister of this church are made by the synodical bishop or written charges against a congregation are made in disciplinary proceedings under Chapter 20 of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* by the synodical bishop or when written charges against a congregation are made in disciplinary proceedings by the Synod Council or the synodical bishop, and the discipline hearing committee determines that no discipline shall be imposed, then if such determination is not reversed or set aside on appeal, indemnification shall be made by the synod to the accused for reasonable attorney’s fees and other reasonable expenses related to the defense of the charges. The determination of the reasonableness of such fees and expenses shall be decided by the Synod Council.

Chapter 17. ADJUDICATION

†S17.01. The synodical bishop and the Executive Committee of the Synod Council shall be available to give counsel when disputes arise within this synod.

†S17.02. The synodical bishop and the Executive Committee of the Synod Council shall receive expressions of concern from rostered ministers of this church, congregations and organizations within this synod; provide a forum in which the parties concerned can seek to work out matters causing distress or conflict; and make appropriate recommendations for their resolution. When the matter at issue cannot be resolved in this manner, the prescribed procedures for investigations, decision, appeal, and adjudication shall be followed. Allegations or charges that could lead to the discipline of a rostered minister of this church shall not be addressed by the Executive Committee but shall be resolved through the disciplinary process set forth in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*.

†S17.03. When there is disagreement among units of this synod on a substantive issue that cannot be resolved by the parties, the aggrieved party or parties may appeal to the synodical bishop and the Executive Committee of the

Synod Council for a consultation. If this consultation fails to resolve the issue, a petition may be addressed by the parties to the Synod Council requesting it to arbitrate the issue. The decision of the Synod Council shall be final.

†S17.04. When a component or beneficiary of a synod has a disagreement on a substantive issue that it cannot resolve, it may address an appeal to the synodical bishop and the Executive Committee of the Synod Council. In this case the decision of the Executive Committee shall prevail, except that upon the motion of a member of the Synod Council, the decision shall be referred to the Synod Council for final action.

†S17.10. Adjudication in a Congregation

†S17.11. When there is disagreement among factions within a congregation on a substantive issue that cannot be resolved by the parties, members of a congregation shall have access to the synodical bishop for consultation after informing the chair of the Congregation Council of their intent. If the consultation fails to resolve the issue(s), the Consultation Committee of this synod shall consider the matter. If the Consultation Committee of this synod shall fail to resolve the issue(s), the matter shall be referred to the Synod Council, whose decision shall be final.

Chapter 18.
AMENDMENTS, BYLAWS, AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS

†S18.10. Amendments to Constitution

†S18.11. Certain sections of this constitution incorporate and record there-in 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 ELCA.

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

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

- a. An amendment may be adopted by a two-thirds vote at a regular meeting of the Synod Assembly after having been presented in writing at the previous regular meeting of the Synod Assembly over the signatures of at least 25 members and been approved by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting at such a regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.**
- b. The Synod Council may propose an amendment, with notice to be sent to the congregations of this synod at least six months prior to the next regular meeting of the Synod Assembly. Such an amendment shall require for adoption a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting at such a regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.**

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

†S18.20. Amendments to Bylaws

†S18.21. This synod may adopt bylaws not in conflict with this constitution 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 Synod Council. Newly adopted continuing resolutions and amendments to existing continuing resolutions shall be reported to the secretary of this church.

Southeastern Synod Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions, as of January 27, 2018.