

**REPORT ON THE  
DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND ACCESSIBILITY AUDIT  
OF THE GOVERNING DOCUMENTS OF THE ELCA**

The 2022 Churchwide Assembly directed the Church Council to engage an external auditor to conduct a comprehensive audit of the ELCA's governing documents for diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA), with the findings to be released to this church. The Church Council approved the engagement of the law firm of Fox, Swibel, Levin & Carroll, LLP to perform this audit; the engagement was completed by and under the supervision of Mr. Neville Reid, a partner in the firm.

The Church Council received Mr. Reid's findings and recommendations with gratitude at its fall 2023 meeting and now releases them to this church for consideration and reflection, including by the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee and the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church.

PLEASE NOTE: This report represents the findings and recommendations of the external auditor, not those of the Church Council, the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church, or the churchwide organization. Its contents are solely the auditor's recommendations, and none of the proposed amendments to governing documents have been considered or put forward by the Church Council at this time.

*November 2023*

**DRAFT EXHIBIT A TO ELCA CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS  
(AND TEMPLATE FOR PROPOSED DEIA HANDBOOK)**

**RECOMMENDED MINIMUM DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION AND ACCESSIBILITY  
STANDARDS FOR THE CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION, SYNODS AND  
CONGREGATIONS OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA**

**1. Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards for Churchwide Organization:**

- a. *Upgrade all personnel policies to reflect DEIA values:*
  - i. Regular DEIA training for all employees
- b. *Create and annually update a database of approved DEIA training educational materials and seminar providers, either Christian-based or consistent with Christianity (“Approved Providers”)*
- c. **[MORE TO COME PENDING FURTHER DISCUSSION WITH AND FEEDBACK FROM CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION]**

**2. Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards for Synods:**

- a. *Structure and implement stronger DEIA personnel policies within synod offices*
- b. *Encourage congregations to adopt and implement the Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards*
- c. *Oversee the implementation of Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards at consenting congregations within the synod*

***d. [MORE TO COME PENDING FURTHER DISCUSSION WITH AND  
FEEDBACK FROM SYNOD REPRESENTATIVES]***

**3. Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards for Congregations:**

- a. *Upgrade all personnel policies to reflect DEIA values*
- b. *Require annual DEIA training for all pastors, church staff and lay leaders, using an Approved Provider and covering at least the following topics:*
  - i. What is DEIA from a Biblical standpoint and why is it important?
  - ii. How does DEIA advance the values of the Kingdom of God?
  - iii. What are microaggressions against members of historically marginalized groups?<sup>1</sup>
    - 1. How do microaggressions trigger feelings of alienation and exclusion among members of historically marginalized groups?
  - iv. What is a Christian's duty to alleviate microaggressions?
  - v. Is this particular church perceived as hostile or unresponsive to members of historically marginalized groups, and if so, how

<sup>1</sup> "Historically marginalized groups" consist of groups that have for some significant period of history been excluded from participation or leadership in the church on the basis of certain characteristics about them, and include racial and ethnic minorities (including African Americans and other persons of color), persons whose primary language is other than English, low income persons, persons with disabilities, gender non-conforming persons and members of the LGBTQIA+ community.

might the church reverse that perception?

- vi. Are congregants who are not members of any historically marginalized group free to provide their views on race, DEIA and related topics without being labeled racist or insensitive, or is there a “cancel culture” within the church in which those persons self-censure instead of share their views?
- vii. How does one determine when an accusation of racism, sexism or homophobia is misplaced or outright false?
- viii. How can this church be more open, inviting and loving to members of historically marginalized groups that fear rejection or hostility if they visit our church?
- ix. What additional initiatives can the church pursue to promote DEIA values among its members, visitors and the community?
- x. What financial resources does our church commit to promoting DEIA values and programs, and should we commit more and if so can we do so on an annual basis?
- xi. How might persons from historically marginalized groups react differently than persons not from those groups, to delicate issues that cause pain, conflict and consternation in the broader community, such as police brutality, voter suppression and policies which limit opportunities or convey disrespect or hatred for individuals who identify as LGBTQIA+?
- xii. What is Christian White Nationalism and what causes people to adhere to it?

1. Is it consistent with Jesus’ teachings?

2. How might members of historically marginalized groups be offended by Christian White Nationalism?

xiii. What is the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement?

1. Is it consistent with Jesus' teachings? Does it offend you? Do you support it?
2. Is it a political movement with no place in the church or its ministries?
3. Why are people drawn to it? What human need does it address?
4. Can the church do a better job of meeting the needs of BLM participants that are not being addressed by the church?

xiv. When is an issue "political", and inappropriate for church discussion? Are there some issues that should not be discussed in the context of church, and if so why?

xv. Any other issue or topic that enhances the congregation's understanding of, or inspires positive actions related to, DEIA issues.

c. Identify at least one church with opposite or at least very different demographic characteristics as your church – by race, gender, youth, political beliefs (conservative vs. liberal), average income, LGBTQIA+ individuals, geography (urban/rural, urban/suburban) or other characteristic – and commit to starting at least a one year relationship with them which shall include the following:

- i. An initial meeting between the pastor of each church to discuss ways in which both churches and their respective congregations can get to know each other better in the ensuing year

- ii. Subsequent periodic meetings between the pastors of both churches, coordinating activities between the two churches to strengthen mutual understanding on DEIA issues, which activities may include the following:
  1. Joint DEIA training sessions with an Approved Provider, covering at least the issues referenced in 3(b) above
  2. Joint Bible Studies or Biblically-based book studies covering issues related to DEIA topics, including books:
    - a. Recounting common experiences of persons in historically marginalized groups
    - b. Discussing ways in which persons in historically marginalized groups rely on their faith and their understanding of God's Word to manage stress and hardship imposed on them
    - c. Testimonies or experiences of persons of faith from rural or other communities other than those of historically marginalized groups, and exploring (i) how and why they may react to issues or problems in the community (e.g., poverty, unemployment, family disfunction, racial tension, police behavior) differently than those in historically marginalized groups, and (ii) why they may not feel as "privileged" racially or otherwise as many in historically marginalized groups may assume
    - d. Testimonies of persons who maintain a strong faith and love for Jesus while at the same time embracing an LGBTQIA+ identity

- e. Testimonies of persons who, in reliance on their faith, no longer embrace an LBTQIA+ identity
3. Speaker series of persons who can expound on their personal experience, negative or positive, with DEIA issues, such as persons who formerly were part of a racist organization but left such organization as a result of a deeper faith in and love for Jesus
- iii. An initial meeting, and subsequent monthly meetings, between the lay leaders of each church, to plan and administer activities, joint discussions and ministries that both churches can engage in together during the ensuing year, such as:
    1. Prison ministry (e.g., Kairos Prison Ministries International)
    2. Missions in general
    3. Homebuilding ministries (e.g., Habitat for Humanity)
    4. Evangelical missions
    5. Serving the homeless and migrants
    6. Fundraising to help families in need of financial assistance, in both rural and urban areas
  - iv. At least six joint worship experiences where congregants of both churches jointly worship together at their respective churches, in person but with video connections for those unable to travel, followed by a fellowship social hour after each service
4. ***[MORE TO COME PENDING FURTHER DIALOGUE WITH ELCA CONGREGATIONS NATIONWIDE]***

# **Edits Recommended by the 2022-23 DEIA Audit to the**

## **CONSTITUTIONS, BYLAWS, AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America®**

as adopted by the Constituting Convention  
of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
(April 30, 1987)  
and  
as amended by subsequent  
Churchwide Assemblies and Church Councils  
of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

*Edition current as of November 2022*

### **Chapter 4. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

- 4.01. 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.
- 4.01A The Church reflects the fullness of the character and values expressed and lived by Jesus Christ, and this church's practices and policies must therefore be determined by that character and those values. The Church identifies Jesus' character and values based on its relationship with Jesus Christ, and application of His Word, and not by the culture or the world. Any practices or policies of this church which conflict with Jesus' character and values must and shall be confronted, challenged and adjusted to conform to that character and those values. The character and values of Jesus include:**
- a. Viewing the entire church as part of the body of Christ, not a mere building or another organization or an extension of any other institution in society.**
  - b. Valuing each person within that body equally as others, so that if one person feels or is viewed as weaker they must be made to feel indispensable.**
  - c. Sharing power and decision-making within the organization so that persons who would otherwise feel devalued or marginalized due to race, class, status, gender, sexual orientation, language or other barrier not wholly within their control are given power to control the development of their potential within the church.**



- d. Sharing in the suffering of those who have been made to feel, or believe themselves to be, the least significant within or unwelcome by the church, including on account of any characteristic they possess but neither chose nor control, so that if one suffers all others suffer with him or her as well, and all in the church endeavor daily to remedy that suffering.
- e. Loving, empowering and serving all of the marginalized.
- f. Opposing racism and racial supremacy in all its forms, and superseding geographic, ethnic and tribal barriers to share the love of Jesus Christ with those even radically different than ourselves, so that all congregants, wherever located and whatever race, experience inclusion in the loving body of Jesus Christ.
- g. Showing grace to those who have been accused of or are engaged in sin, while at the same time respecting the authority of Scripture and holiness, and never equating holiness with hatred.
- h. Avoiding hypocrisy, including the selective enforcement of applicable Scriptural moral mandates or prohibitions.
- i. Correcting systems which induce spiritual corruption in individuals or cause needless suffering, including on those who have historically been excluded from full participation in the Church.
- j. Respecting and debating diversity of opinions within the church, including on divisive social issues, without destroying the church.
- k. Promoting justice for those experiencing oppression within groups of larger society.
- l. Telling the truth and refusing to validate lies.

4.01B Since this church must reflect the character and values of Jesus Christ, its policies and practices designed to promote DEIA must therefore be rooted in but also limited by that character and such values, including as expressed in Section 4.01A above. DEIA, as a policy, shall not be fundamentally determined by any other source of authority or influence, such as political affiliation or secular ideology, culture, academia or media. In the event of a conflict between this church's DEIA policy and any of these other sources of authority or influence, DEIA policy derived from the character and values of Jesus Christ must and shall prevail. This church acknowledges, however, that there may be overlap between the church's DEIA policy based on the character and values of Jesus Christ and similar policies espoused by well-intentioned non-religious sources, which other sources may inform, but not control, the church's DEIA policy.

4.02. To participate in God's mission, this church shall:

- a. Proclaim God's saving Gospel of justification by grace for Christ's sake through faith alone, according to the apostolic witness in the Holy Scripture, preserving and transmitting the Gospel faithfully to future generations.
- b. Carry out Christ's Great Commission by reaching out to all people to bring them to faith in Christ and by doing all ministry with a global awareness consistent with the understanding of God as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier of all.
- c. Serve in response to God's love to meet human needs, caring for the sick and the aged, advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations, and standing in solidarity with the poor and oppressed and committing itself to their needs.
- d. Worship God in proclamation of the Word and administration of the sacraments and through lives of prayer, praise, thanksgiving, witness, and service.
- e. Nurture its members in the Word of God so as to grow in faith and hope and love, to see daily life as the primary setting for the exercise of their Christian calling, and to use the gifts of the Spirit for their life together and for their calling in the world.
- f. Manifest the unity given to the people of God by living together in the love of Christ and by joining with other Christians in prayer and action to express and preserve the unity which the Spirit gives.
- g. Welcome and show love and compassion to all persons in the LGBTQIA+ community, who are seeking a relationship with Jesus Christ but may have historically experienced trauma, rejection or even hatred from the church. This church will show equal value, respect, love and compassion to all those members of the LGBTQIA+ community whose faith and interpretation of God's Word has led them to avoid acting on sexual attractions proscribed by Scripture, as to those who love The Lord and neither perceive nor experience any inconsistency between their love of Jesus and their sexuality. Such equal respect, love and compassion is not conditioned on whether a congregation or synod has taken a particular position on competing proposals at any time under consideration by the church related to sexual ethics or broader issues of concern to the LGBTQIA+ community.
- h. Actively promote Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility in all parts of the church – the churchwide organization, the synods and the congregations – at all times, including (without limitation) by

encouraging synods and congregations to adopt and diligently implement the 2019 DEIA Recommendations and strive to exceed the Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards.

i. Actively mentor all persons who have been historically underrepresented in positions of leadership within the church (including members of Historically Underrepresented Groups) so that the clergy and lay leadership at the churchwide, synod and congregation levels increasingly reflect materially greater diversity than has historically existed.

4.03. To fulfill these purposes, this church shall:

- a. Receive, establish, and support those congregations, ministries, organizations, institutions, and agencies necessary to carry out God's mission through this church.
- b. Encourage and equip all members to worship, learn, serve, and witness; to fulfill their calling to serve God in the world; and to be stewards of the earth, their lives, and the Gospel.
- c. Call forth, equip, certify, set apart, and oversee a ministry of Word and Sacrament, a ministry of Word and Service, and such other forms of ministry that will enable this church to fulfill its mission.
- d. Seek unity in faith and life with all Lutherans within its boundaries and be ready to enter union negotiations whenever such unity is manifest.
- e. Foster Christian unity by participating in ecumenical activities, contributing its witness and work and cooperating with other churches which confess God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- f. Develop relationships with communities of other faiths for dialogue and common action.
- g. Lift its voice in concord and work in concert with forces for good, to serve humanity, cooperating with church and other groups participating in activities that promote justice, relieve misery, and reconcile the estranged.
- h. Produce and publish worship materials for corporate, family, and personal use and resources for education, witness, service, and stewardship.
- i. Establish and maintain theological seminaries, schools, colleges, universities, and other educational institutions to equip people for leadership and service in church and society.
- j. Assure faithfulness to this church's confessional position and purpose and provide for resolution of disputes.
- k. Publish a periodical and make use of the arts and public communication media to proclaim the Gospel and to inform, interpret, and edify.
- l. Study social issues and trends, work to discover the causes of oppression and injustice, and develop programs of ministry and advocacy to further human dignity, freedom, justice, and peace in the world.
- m. Establish, support, and recognize institutions and agencies that minister to people in spiritual and temporal needs.
- n. Work with civil authorities in areas of mutual endeavor, maintaining institutional separation of church and state in a relation of functional interaction.
- o. Provide structures and decision-making processes for this church that foster mutuality and interdependence and that involve people in making decisions that affect them.
- p. Support the mission of this church by arranging for and encouraging financial contributions for its work, management of its resources, and processes of planning and evaluation.
- q. Provide fair personnel practices and adequate compensation, benefits, and pensions for those employed by this church.

## Chapter 5.

### PRINCIPLES OF ORGANIZATION

5.01. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be one church. This church recognizes that all power and authority in the Church belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ, its head. Therefore, all actions of this church by congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization shall be carried out under his rule and authority in accordance with the following principles:

- a. The congregations, synods, and churchwide organization shall act in accordance with the Confession of Faith set forth in Chapter 2 of this constitution and with the Statement of Purpose set forth in Chapter 4.
- b. This church, in faithfulness to the Gospel, is committed to be an inclusive church in the midst of division in society. Therefore, in their organization and outreach, the congregations, synods, and churchwide units of this church shall seek to exhibit the inclusive unity that is God's will for the Church.
- c. The congregations, synods, and churchwide organization of this church are interdependent expressions sharing responsibly in God's mission. In an interdependent relationship, primary responsibility for particular functions will vary among the expressions. Whenever possible, the entity most directly affected by a decision

shall be the principal party responsible for decision and implementation, with the other entities facilitating and assisting. Each congregation, synod, and separately incorporated ministry, as well as the churchwide organization itself, is a separate legal entity and is responsible for exercising its powers and authorities.

- d. Each congregation and synod in its governing documents shall include the Confession of Faith and Statement of Purpose and such components as are required in the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*. Beyond these common elements, congregations and synods shall be free to organize in such manner as each deems appropriate for its jurisdiction. The churchwide organization, congregations and synods are each encouraged to embrace and implement the respective Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards applicable to them.
- e. Except as otherwise provided in this constitution and bylaws, the appropriate office or unit of the churchwide organization, through the Church Council, shall establish processes that will ensure that at least 60 percent of the members of its assemblies, councils, committees, boards, and other organizational units shall be laypersons; that, as nearly as possible, at least 45 percent of the lay members of these assemblies, councils, committees, boards, or other organizational units shall be women and, as nearly as possible, at least 45 percent shall be men, and that the representation of rostered ministers shall include both men and women. At least 10 percent of the members of these assemblies, councils, committees, boards, or other organizational units shall be Persons of Color and/or Non-Primary English Speaking Persons; and at least an additional 10 percent of such members shall be persons from Historically Underrepresented Groups other than Persons of Color and Non-Primary English Speaking persons. Processes shall be developed that will assure that in selecting staff and laypersons to fill positions of leadership for committees, task forces and other organizational units, there will be a balance of women and men, persons from Historically Underrepresented Groups and persons on the rosters of this church. At least 10 percent of the members of these assemblies, councils, committees, boards, or other organizational units shall be persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English. Processes shall be developed that will assure that in selecting staff there will be a balance of women and men, persons of color and persons whose primary language is other than English, laypersons, and persons on the rosters of this church. This balance is to be evident in the selection of staff consistent with the inclusive policy of this church.
- f. Except as otherwise provided in this constitution and bylaws, synods, through synod councils, shall establish processes that will ensure that at least 60 percent of the members of their assemblies, councils, committees, boards, and other organizational units shall be laypersons; that, as nearly as possible, at least 45 percent of the lay members of their assemblies, councils, committees, boards, or other organizational units shall be women and, as nearly as possible, at least 45 percent shall be men, and that the representation of rostered ministers shall include both women and men. Each synod shall establish processes that will enable it to reach a minimum goal that 10 percent of the membership of its assemblies, councils, committees, boards or other organizational units shall be Persons of Color and/or Non-Primary English Speaking persons; and at least an additional 10 percent of such members are persons from Historically Underrepresented Groups other than Persons of Color and Non-Primary English Speaking persons. Each synod shall establish processes that will enable it to reach a minimum goal that 10 percent of the membership of its assemblies, councils, committees, boards, or other organizational units be persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English.
- g. A layperson is a person who is not on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament or the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of this church.
- h. Leaders in this church should demonstrate that they are servants by their words, lifestyle, and manner of leadership. Leaders in this church will recognize their accountability to the Triune God, to the whole Church, to each other, and to the organization of this church in which they have been asked to serve.
- i. As a steward of the resources that God has provided, this church shall organize itself to make the most effective use of its resources to accomplish its mission.
- j. Each assembly, council, committee, board, task force, or other body of the churchwide organization or any churchwide 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, 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, task force, or other body.

5.01.A.16. This church commits itself to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility, which includes advancing the participation of all persons in Historically Underrepresented Groups at all levels of the church, and addressing their spiritual needs. The churchwide organization shall work with synods as they encourage congregations to develop realistic but firm timetables to achieve, and then actually achieve or exceed, the Recommended Minimum

~~DEIA Standards, to the extent such congregations elect to do so. This church commits itself to ethnic and racial diversity. Each expression of this church shall annually assess its ethnic and racial diversity when compared to the demographic data of its community or territory. The churchwide organization will work with synods as they assist congregations to reach out to persons of color or whose primary language is other than English.~~

**5.01.B19.** Each synod shall submit its goals and strategies to the appropriate churchwide unit or office and shall annually submit a report on progress toward its goals to such unit or office, ~~which report shall include progress made in the subject year towards implementing the (i) 2019 DEIA Recommendations and (ii) Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards.~~

**5.01.B2X.** Each congregation shall submit its goals and strategies to the appropriate synod and shall annually submit a report on progress toward its goals to such synod, which report shall include progress made by such congregation in the subject year towards implementing the (i) 2019 DEIA Recommendations, and (ii) the Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards, in each case, to the extent applicable to congregations.

**5.01.C21.** The term, “persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English,” shall be understood to mean African American, African Descent, Black, Arab and Middle Eastern, Asian and Pacific Islander, Latino, American Indian, and Alaska Native people. This definition, however, shall not be understood as limiting this church’s commitment to inclusive participation in its life and work. ~~DEIA, as an acronym, shall refer to diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility. Its component parts shall be defined as follows:~~

a. Diversity or diverse shall refer to the variety of persons at all levels of the organizational structure of the church who possess or represent different characteristics, experiences and struggles that may (i) determine their world view, their relationship to the church, and their interest in and response to the church’s mission and initiatives, and (ii) affect the church’s effectiveness as an agent for making persons disciples of Jesus Christ. This definition shall not be static at any period of the church’s history, but shall evolve as persons who come forward with previously unrepresented views or characteristics seek a relationship with Jesus Christ and with the church in particular.

Diversity currently shall include, without limitation, persons with the following characteristics or who tend to identify with the following groups:

1) Racial: All racial groups.

2) Gender: All persons identifying as male or female.

3) Gender Non-Conforming: All persons whose gender identity and/or biological characteristics may not completely fit with the dominant and expected ways of acting as, or being, a man or woman or a boy or girl.

4) LGBTQIA+: All persons whose sexual orientation or gender generally conforms to (i) lesbian, bisexual, gay, transgender, queer, intersex, or queer/questioning sexualities, (ii) asexual, or (iii) a category of sexuality or gender not yet identified.

5) Non-Primary English Speaking: All persons whose primary spoken language is other than English, including without limitation persons from countries other than the United States who have obtained legal immigration or asylum status and whose primary language is other than English.

6) Geographic: All persons who (i) choose to identify and live with others unique to a particular geographic subgroup, including urban, rural or suburban, and (ii) tend to desire not to live or identify with other persons in substantially different geographic locations.

7) Age: All persons who primarily choose to identify with a particular age group or generation, including without limitation teenagers, young adults, middle-aged adults, the elderly, and the generations termed “baby boomers”, “millennials” and “Gen Z”.

8) Socioeconomic Class: All persons with similar social mobility and economic resources, or lack thereof, as other persons within their group.

9) Disability: All persons living with varying degrees of serious challenges to their physical or mental health that may limit their ability to fully participate in the life of the church and its ministries and activities.

b. Equity is a two-part definition. It shall refer to the fair treatment of all people within the church, so that the development of their God-given gifts and their faith in Him is not impeded by any of their characteristics, including race, age, income, gender, language or sexuality. It shall also refer to the permanent commitment of the church to provide resources to a person or group of persons who lack such resources, to enable them to develop their gifts and their faith and make a long term contribution to the church and society, notwithstanding that such allocated resources are not also provided to other persons who possess greater resources independently of the church.

*c. Inclusion shall refer to the proactive, meaningful inclusion of diverse individuals in the parts of the church that exercise power and make decisions affecting the conduct, affairs and future growth of the church, the synods and/or the congregations.*

*d. Accessibility shall refer to the design of the church's infrastructure (including its physical buildings and meeting spaces) to ensure that persons with a disability can participate in church affairs with safety and dignity.*

**5.01.C2X** *The term "2019 DEIA Recommendations" shall mean the recommendations set forth in the "How Strategic and Authentic is Our Diversity; A Call for Confession, Reflection and Healing Action," as adopted by the fifteenth triennial Churchwide Assembly on August 9, 2019 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.*

*The term "Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards" shall mean the tasks, projects, commitments and timetables set forth for the churchwide organization, each of the synods and each of the congregations stated on Exhibit A to the Continuing Resolutions, as the same may be amended, supplemented, expanded or modified from time to time; provided however, that any synod or congregation, while encouraged to comply with or engage in any such tasks, projects, commitments or timetables, may elect not to do so within their sole discretion.*

**5.01.C3X** *"Historically Underrepresented Groups" shall consist of specific groups of persons who have been historically underrepresented in the leadership and membership of the church, and shall include without limitation the following groups:*

*a. Persons of Color or "persons of color", meaning persons who identify as African-American or are of African descent, Black, Arab or Middle Eastern, Asian or Pacific Islander, Latino, American Indian, Alaska Native people, and persons who do not primarily identify as Caucasian and are of a mixture of non-Caucasian races.*

*b. Gender Fluid persons.*

*c. LGBTQIA+ persons.*

*d. Persons who possess a Disability.*

*e. Lower Income persons, meaning persons whose annual income is less than the median national income for the United States as of the end of the immediately preceding calendar year.*

*f. Non-Primary English Speaking persons.*

*The combined term "persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English" shall refer to Persons of Color and/or Non-Primary English Speaking persons as hereinabove defined.*

*None of the foregoing definitions of persons within Historically Underrepresented Groups shall ever be construed to limit this church's commitment to inclusive participation in its life and work.*

**5.01.D16.** *The Churchwide Assembly shall receive reports from the presiding bishop and the secretary that monitor this church's progress toward meeting the commitment expressed in 5.01.A16.*

**5.01.E19.** *The Church Council shall establish triennial percentage goals for this church to meet the commitment expressed in 5.01.A16. The minimum goal shall be that at least 10 percent of the members of this church shall be Persons of Color and/or Non-Primary English Speaking persons; an additional minimum 10 percent shall be persons from Historically Underrepresented Groups other than Persons of Color and Non-Primary English Speaking persons. ~~The minimum goal shall be that at least 10 percent of the members of this church shall be persons of color or whose primary language is other than English.~~*

**5.01.F19.** *It is the goal of this church that at least 10 percent of the voting members of the Churchwide Assembly, Church Council, and churchwide boards and committees be youth and young adults. The Church Council shall establish a plan for implementing this goal. For purposes of the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA, 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.*

**5.01.G19.** *To implement 5.01.g., those deacons elected as laypersons prior to the adoption of this provision may complete the term to which they were elected as a layperson. They would not be eligible for reelection as a layperson if such reelection were otherwise possible.*

**5.01.H21.** *For purposes of the representational principles set forth in 5.01.e. and f., the percentage of laypersons that is not allocated to women or men may be allocated to persons who identify as gender non-binary, gender fluid, women, men, or other genders.*

## **Chapter 7. MINISTRY**

**7.30. STANDARDS FOR MINISTERS OF WORD AND SACRAMENT**

**7.31. In accordance with the description stated in 7.22., ministers of Word and Sacrament shall be governed by the following standards, policies, and procedures.**

- 7.31.01. Basic Standards.** Persons admitted to and continued in the ministry of Word and Sacrament of this church shall satisfactorily meet and maintain the following, as defined by this church's constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions and in policies developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council:
- a. commitment to Christ;
  - b. acceptance of and adherence to the Confession of Faith of this church;
  - c. willingness and ability to serve in response to the needs of this church;
  - d. academic and practical qualifications for ministry, including leadership abilities and competence in interpersonal relationships;
  - e. commitment to lead a life worthy of the Gospel of Christ and in so doing to be an example in faithful service and holy living;
  - f. receipt and acceptance of a letter of call; ~~and~~
  - g. membership in a congregation of this church-;
  - h. genuine commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility, and achieving the Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards and the 2019 DEIA Recommendations at the congregational level; and
  - i. willingness to learn how best to serve the needs of communities with a high concentration of persons from Historically Underrepresented Groups, and a commitment to effectively serve in such communities if called or appointed to do so.
- 7.31.02. Responsibilities.** Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,
- a. Every minister of Word and Sacrament shall:
    - 1) preach the Word;
    - 2) administer the sacraments;
    - 3) conduct public worship;
    - 4) provide pastoral care;
    - 5) seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel;
    - 6) impart knowledge of this church and its wider ministry through available channels of effective communication;
    - 7) witness to the Kingdom of God in the community, in the nation, and abroad; ~~and~~
    - 8) speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, and embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations-; ~~and~~
    - 9) actively encouraging congregations to implement the 2019 DEIA Recommendations and the Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards applicable to congregations, at their respective congregational level, and furthermore assisting synods and the churchwide organization in implementing the 2019 DEIA Recommendations and Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards applicable to them.
  - 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;
    - 4) with the council, administer discipline;
    - 5) endeavor to increase the support given by the congregation to the work of the churchwide organization and the synod; ~~and~~
    - 6) encourage adherence to covenantal relationships with this church as expressed in the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*-; ~~and~~
    - 7) actively encourage their congregation to adopt and implement the 2019 DEIA Recommendations and the Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards applicable to congregations, at their respective congregational level, and furthermore assist synods and the churchwide organization in implementing the 2019 DEIA Recommendations and the Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards applicable to them.
- 7.31.03. Preparation and Approval.** Except as provided in 7.31.04., a candidate for the ministry of Word and Sacrament shall have:
- a. membership in a congregation of this church and registration, by its pastor and council, of the candidate with the candidacy committee;
  - b. been granted entrance to candidacy by and under the guidance and supervision of the appropriate committee before being approved for call;
  - c. satisfactorily completed the requirements for the Master of Divinity degree from an accredited theological school in North America or completed a program of study for those accepted into the TEEM program (Theological Education for Emerging Ministries), including practical preparation, as defined by the appropriate churchwide unit, such as internship and supervised clinical work;

- d. completed the expectations and outcomes established for Lutheran learning and formation in a seminary of this church or of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, except when waived by the appropriate committee in consultation with the faculty of a seminary of this church or of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada;
- e. been recommended for approval by the faculty of a seminary of this church or of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada or have received the waiver described in **7.31.03.d.**;
- f. been examined and approved by the appropriate committee according to criteria, policies, and procedures recommended by the appropriate churchwide unit, after consultation with the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council;
- g. been recommended to a congregation or other entity by the bishop of the synod to which the candidate has been assigned for first call in accordance with the procedures recommended by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council; and
- h. received and accepted a properly issued and attested letter of call.

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**7.60. STANDARDS FOR MINISTERS OF WORD AND SERVICE**

**7.61. In accordance with the description stated in 7.52, ministers of Word and Service shall be governed by the following standards, policies, and procedures.**

**7.61.01. Basic Standards.** Persons admitted to and continued in the ministry of Word and Service of this church shall satisfactorily meet and maintain the following, as defined by this church's constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions and in policies developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council:

- a. commitment to Christ;
- b. acceptance of and adherence to the Confession of Faith of this church;
- c. willingness and ability to serve in response to the needs of this church;
- d. academic and practical qualifications for ministry, including leadership abilities and competence in interpersonal relationships;
- e. commitment to lead a life worthy of the Gospel of Christ and in so doing to be an example in faithful service and holy living;
- f. receipt and acceptance of a letter of call; ~~and~~
- g. membership in a congregation of this church; ~~;~~
- h. genuine commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility, and achieving or implementing the Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards and the 2019 DEIA Recommendations at the congregational level; and
- i. willingness to learn how best to serve the needs of communities with a high concentration of persons from Historically Underrepresented Groups, and a commitment to effectively serve in such communities if called or appointed to do so.

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

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

**7.61.03. Preparation and Approval.** Except as provided in 7.61.04., a candidate who is to be called and received onto the roster as a minister of Word and Service shall have:

- a. membership in a congregation of this church and registration, by its pastor and council, of the candidate with the candidacy committee;
- b. been granted entrance to candidacy by and under the guidance and supervision of the appropriate committee before being approved for call;

- c. completed the academic and practical preparation according to criteria and procedures established by the appropriate churchwide unit, after consultation with the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council;
- d. been examined and approved by the appropriate committee according to criteria, policies, and procedures recommended by the appropriate churchwide unit, after consultation with the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council;
- e. been recommended to a congregation or other entity by the bishop of the synod in which the candidate is being considered for first call in accordance with the procedures recommended by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council; ~~and~~
- f. received and accepted a properly issued and attested letter of call;
- g. have demonstrated a genuine commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility, and achieving the Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards and the 2019 DEIA Recommendations at the congregational level; and
- h. have demonstrated a willingness to learn how best to serve the needs of communities with a high concentration of persons from Historically Underrepresented Groups, and a commitment to effectively serve in such communities if called or appointed to do so.

**7.61.04. Approval under Other Circumstances.** A candidate may, for reasons of age or prior experience, be granted approval under criteria and procedures which permit certain equivalencies as defined by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council.

**7.61.05.** No person who belongs to any organization such as a lodge or fraternal order which claims to possess in its teachings and ceremonies that which the Lord has given solely to the Church shall be called and received onto the roster of Ministers of Word and Service or otherwise received into the ministry of this church, nor shall any person so called and received onto the roster of Ministers of Word and Service or otherwise received by this church be retained in its ministry who subsequently joins or is discovered to be a member of such an organization.

**7.61.06.** Roster status in more than one church body is precluded in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. As required by constitutional provision 7.52. and bylaw 7.61.01., ministers on the Word and Service roster of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America must accept and adhere to this church’s Confession of Faith, as well as abide by this church’s standards and policies for ministers of Word and Service.

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**Chapter 8.**  
**RELATIONSHIPS**

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**8.22. Colleges and Universities.** This church shall relate to its colleges and universities in their mission to educate students for vocations in the Church and the world. The churchwide organization, through the appropriate churchwide unit, shall support an association of this church’s colleges and universities.

**8.22.01.** The relationship of this church to its colleges and universities shall be guided by policies fostering educational institutions dedicated to the Lutheran tradition wherein such institutions are an essential part of God’s mission in the world; faithful to the will of God as institutions providing quality instruction in religion and a lively ministry of worship, outreach, and service; diligent in their preparation of leaders committed to truth, excellence, and ethical values; and pledged to the well-being of students in the development of mind, body, and spirit.

**8.22.02.** Each college and university of this church shall establish a relationship with:

- a. a synod or synods;
- b. a corporation whose voting members are elected or appointed by a synod or synods, other organizational units (conferences, clusters, etc.), or congregations; or,
- c. a corporation
  - 1) that has voting members, at least a majority of whom shall consist of members of the Churchwide Assembly or the Church Council, and
  - 2) that shall hold the meeting of such a corporation in conjunction with the Churchwide Assembly or the Church Council for the purpose of approving amendments to the articles of incorporation, and approving amendments to other governing documents which affect the relationship between the college or university and this church. A majority of the members of the board of a corporation that meets in conjunction with the Churchwide Assembly or Church Council shall be members of this church or of a church body with which this church is in a relationship of full communion, but under no circumstances shall fewer than forty (40) percent of the members of such board be members of this church.

**8.22.02A** Each seminary of this church shall review and is encouraged to implement the portions of the 2019 DEIA Recommendations applicable to seminaries, including without limitation the “Recommendations for Theological Education and Leadership” included therein.



- 8.22.03. Responsibility for the size and composition of a college or university's board of directors, including recruiting and electing board members, belongs to each college or university of this church. This responsibility shall be exercised congruent with the form of relationship, as provided in 8.22.02., established by the college or university with this church.
- 8.22.04. Responsibility for governance and governance documents rests with each college or university of this church. This responsibility shall be exercised congruent with the form of relationship as provided in 8.22.02., established by the college or university with this church.
- 8.22.05. In addition to and consistent with the above provision 8.22. and bylaws 8.22.01. through 8.22.04., colleges and universities of this church where a school, department, or unit of that institution is a seminary of this church must comply with all requirements, policies, procedures, and standards specified in provision 8.21. and bylaws 8.21.01. through 8.21.08.
- 8.23. **Institutions and Agencies. This church shall seek to meet human needs through encouragement of its people to individual and corporate action, and through establishing, developing, recognizing, and supporting institutions and agencies that minister to people in their spiritual and temporal needs.**
- 8.23.01. Social ministry organizations affiliate with this church through criteria and policies developed by the appropriate churchwide unit and through membership in Lutheran Services in America.

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**Chapter 9.**  
**CONGREGATIONS**

- .....
- 9.20. **CRITERIA FOR RECOGNITION AND RECEPTION**
  - 9.21. **This church shall recognize, receive, and maintain on the roster those congregations which by their practice as well as their governing documents:**
    - a. **preach the Word, administer the sacraments, and carry out God's mission;**
    - b. **accept this church's Confession of Faith;**
    - c. **agree to the Statement of Purpose of this church;**
    - d. **agree to call pastoral leadership from the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church in accordance with the call procedures of this church, except in special circumstances as defined in the bylaws accompanying this provision, and with the approval of the synod bishop;**
    - e. **agree to be responsible for their life as a Christian community;**
    - f. **agree to support the life and work of this church; and**
    - g. **adhere to the additional commitments expressed in this chapter of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.***
  - 9.21.01. Approval of the synod bishop, as required in 9.21.d., involves the bishop's attesting that a candidate for the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church has been approved, in conformity with the governing documents and policies of this church, through the synod candidacy process for first call as a seminary graduate or for call in this church through approval for reception into this church from another Lutheran church body or another Christian church body. Consultation with the synod bishop in accordance with the call procedures and governing documents of this church and the synod is required for the calling of pastoral leadership from among persons on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church or persons who are approved as eligible candidates for the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church.
  - 9.21.02. Under special circumstances, subject to the approval of the synod bishop and the concurrence of the congregation, a minister of Word and Sacrament of a church body with which this church officially has established a relationship of full communion by action of a Churchwide Assembly may serve temporarily under contract as pastor of a congregation of this church.
  - 9.22. **In addition to this Chapter 9, all congregations of this church (i) are encouraged to (a) adopt in their governance documents the definitions of DEIA (and the constituent definitions of diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility set forth therein), 2019 DEIA Recommendations, Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards, and Historically Underrepresented Groups, each as hereinabove defined, and (b) embrace, adopt and abide by Constitutional provision Sections 4.01A, 4.01B, 4.02(d), 4.02(g), 4.02(h), and 5.01(d), (ii) shall embrace, adopt and abide by Constitutional provision Sections 6.01, 7.46 and 7.75, and (iii) shall embrace, adopt and abide by bylaw provisions 20.41.01 through 20.41.11. In addition to this Chapter 9, all congregations of this church shall abide by the provisions of 6.01., 7.46., and 7.75., and bylaws 20.41.01. through 20.41.11.**
  - 9.23. **In accord with constitutional provision 9.21.d. and its accompanying bylaws and without invoking the provisions of Chapter 20, a congregation that calls or otherwise maintains as its pastor a person who is neither:**
    - a. **on this church's roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament; nor**
    - b. **approved for the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament and called pursuant to bylaw 9.21.01.; nor**
    - c. **authorized as a minister pursuant to bylaw 7.31.10.; nor**

- d. a minister of Word and Sacrament of a church body with which this church has established a relationship of full communion and contracted with pursuant to bylaw 9.21.02.;  
may be removed from the roster of congregations of this church by the Synod Council upon recommendation of the synod bishop.
- 9.24. A recognized and received congregation that is part of this church shall, when legally possible, be incorporated and may, in its sole discretion:
- a. own property and be responsible for its care; and
  - b. call or employ staff.
- 9.25. A congregation newly formed by this church and any congregation seeking recognition and reception by this church shall:
- a. 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 this constitution.
  - b. Adopt governing documents that include fully and without alterations the Preamble, Chapter 1, where applicable, and all required provisions of Chapters 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 15, 16, 17, 18, and 19 in the *Model Constitution for Congregations* consistent with requirements of this constitution and the Constitution for Synods 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 the synod, or the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, may be adopted as described in Chapters 17 and 18 of the *Model Constitution for Congregations*. Notwithstanding the foregoing or any other provision of these Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to the contrary, if a congregation is designated a Synod Authorizing Worshiping Community (SAWC) by the synod to which it belongs, then that congregation may adopt the applicable bylaws for SAWC congregations as approved by such synod as part of its governing documents. In the event of any conflict between the bylaws of a SAWC congregation as approved by the applicable synod, and any bylaws within these Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the synod-approved bylaws of such SAWC congregation shall control.
  - c. Accept the commitments expected of all congregations of this church as stated in \*C6.01., \*C6.02., and \*C6.03. of the *Model Constitution for Congregations*.
- 9.25A A congregation newly formed by this church and any congregation seeking recognition and reception by this church is encouraged to accept and implement the 2019 DEIA Recommendations and the part of the Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards that applies to congregations, as soon as practicable.
- 9.26. Recognition and reception into this church of transferring or independent congregations by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is based on the judgment of the synod and action by the synod through the Synod Council and Synod Assembly. The synod bishop shall provide for prompt reporting of such additions to the secretary of this church for addition to the roster of congregations.
- a. If a congregation is a member of another church body, the leadership of the congregation first should consult with the appropriate authorities of that church body before taking action to leave its current church body. After such consultation, leaders of the congregation should contact the synod bishop or synod staff in this church where the congregation is located.
  - b. The synod bishop or synod staff where the transferring or independent congregation is located shall confer with the congregation to assure its understanding and acceptance of commitment to and affiliation with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- 9.27. Each congregation, except those which are in relationship with the Slovak Zion Synod, shall establish a relationship with the synod in whose territory it is located.
- 9.30. RESERVATION OF AUTHORITY
- 9.31. Congregations of this church shall have authority in all matters that are not assigned by the constitution and bylaws of this church to synods and the churchwide organization.
- 9.40. FUNCTIONS
- 9.41. The congregation shall:
- a. Provide services of worship at which the Word of God is preached and the sacraments are administered.
  - b. Provide pastoral care and assist all members to participate in this ministry.
  - c. Challenge, equip, and support all members in carrying out their calling in their daily life and in their congregation.
  - d. Teach the Word of God.
  - e. Witness to the reconciling Word of God in Christ, reaching out to all people.

- f. Respond to human need, work for justice and peace, care for the sick and the suffering, and participate responsibly in society.
- g. Motivate its members to provide financial support for the congregation's ministry and the ministry of the synod and the churchwide organization.
- h. Foster and participate in interdependent relationships with other congregations, the synod, and the churchwide organization.
- i. Foster and participate in ecumenical relationships consistent with churchwide policy.

9.50. GOVERNANCE

9.51. Each congregation shall structure itself in such a way as to involve its members in fulfilling the definition, purpose, and functions of a congregation of this church.

9.52. The governing documents of congregations recognized at the establishment of this church shall continue to govern such congregations until amended. When such a congregation wishes to amend any provision of its governing documents, the governing documents of that congregation shall be so amended to conform to 9.25.b. **and the other requirements of this Chapter 9, including without limitation Section 9.22.** The synod responsible for the review of such amendments may permit, for good cause, a congregation to retain particular unamended provisions in the congregation's governing documents that were in force at the establishment of this church.

9.53. Each congregation shall have governing documents, no terms of which shall conflict with provision 9.21. **or 9.22.** Subject to the provisions of 9.52., these documents shall contain the elements listed in the bylaws. The judgment on whether a congregation meets the criteria listed in 9.21. **or 9.22.** shall be made by this church through the synod of this church to which the congregation relates.

9.53.01. The governing documents of congregations shall include:

- a. the Confession of Faith;
- b. the Statement of Purpose;
- c. provisions describing the congregation's relationship to this church;
- d. a process for calling a rostered minister;
- e. a listing of the duties of a rostered minister;
- f. provisions describing the role of the rostered minister in the governance of the congregation;
- g. a process for removal of a rostered minister;
- h. provisions regulating the disposition of property;
- i. a legislative process;
- j. an enumeration of officers with definition of authority and functions of each;
- k. a definition of each organizational component (e.g., committees, boards); and
- l. a process for the discipline of members.

9.53.02. A *Model Constitution for Congregations* shall be provided by this church. Amendments to the *Model Constitution for Congregations* shall be made in the same manner as prescribed in Chapter 22 for amendments of the bylaws of this church. Congregations are expected to resolve conflicts between their current governing documents and the *Model Constitution for Congregations*.

9.53.03. Each congregation shall provide a copy of its governing documents to the synod. All proposed changes in the constitution or incorporation documents of a congregation shall be referred to the synod with which the congregation is affiliated. The synod shall notify the congregation of its decision to approve or disapprove the proposed changes; the changes shall go into effect upon notification that the synod has approved them. The synod shall recognize that congregations may organize themselves in a manner which they deem most appropriate, consistent with this chapter.

9.53.04. Each congregation shall take the necessary steps to protect its members and this church from liability, including incorporation as indicated in 9.24, appropriate insurance coverage, and similar actions.

9.53.05. Congregations shall normally maintain a fiscal year of January 1 through December 31.

9.53.06. 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.

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**Chapter 10.  
SYNODS**

10.20. PURPOSE

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

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

10.21.01. The responsibilities of the synod include the following:

- a. providing for pastoral care of congregations, ministers of Word and Sacrament, and ministers of Word and Service in the synod, including:
  - 1) approving candidates for the ministry of Word and Sacrament in cooperation with the appropriate seminaries of this church, which may be done through multi-synod 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-synod committees;
  - 4) authorizing ordinations and ordaining 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 constitution; **and**
- d. providing for archives in conjunction with other synods; **and**
- e. implementing the part of the Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards applicable to synods, and oversee the adoption and implementation of the Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards by each of the congregations within the synod electing to adopt the same, as soon as practicable.

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

- a. developing 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; **and**
- f. grouping congregations in conferences, clusters, coalitions, or other area subdivisions for mission purposes; **and**
- g. assisting congregations in drafting and implementing plans and strategies to achieve the Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards, to the extent such congregations have agreed to adopt the same.

10.21.03. 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 and global companions, the responsibilities of the synod include the following:

- a. promoting interdependent relationships among congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization, and entering into mutually beneficial relationships with other synods in the region;
- b. fostering organizations for youth, women, and men, and organizations for language or ethnic communities **or any other members of Historically Underrepresented Groups, subject to and consistent with the provisions of Sections 4.01A and 4.01B herein;**
- c. developing relationships with social ministry organizations and ministries, participating in their mission planning, and providing supportive funding;
- d. supporting relationships with and providing funding on behalf of colleges, universities, and campus ministries;
- e. maintaining relationships with and providing funding on behalf of seminaries and continuing education centers;
- f. fostering relationships with camps and other outdoor ministries;
- g. fostering relationships with preschools, elementary schools, and secondary schools operated by congregations of the synod;
- h. fostering relationships with ecumenical and global companions; and

- 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.

**10.21.04.** 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; and
- d. providing ecumenical guidance and encouragement.

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#### **10.40. SYNOD ASSEMBLY**

**10.41. Each synod shall have a Synod Assembly, which shall meet at least triennially. Special meetings may be called as needed. With the exception of ministers on the rosters of synods other than their synod of residence, each member of the Synod Assembly, the Synod Council, a board, committee, or other organizational unit of the synod shall be a voting member of a congregation of the synod.**

**10.41.01.** Membership of the Synod Assembly, of which at least 60 percent of the voting membership shall be composed of laypersons, shall be constituted as follows:

- a. All ministers of Word and Sacrament under call on the roster of the synod in attendance at the Synod Assembly shall be voting members.
- b. All ministers of Word and Service under call on the roster of the synod shall be voting members in the Synod Assembly.
- 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 the synod, typically one of whom shall be a man and one of whom shall be a woman, shall be voting members. The Synod Council shall establish a formula to provide additional lay representation from congregations on the basis of the number of baptized members in the congregation. The Synod Council shall seek to ensure that, as nearly as possible, at least 45 percent of the lay members of the assembly shall be women and, as nearly as possible, at least 45 percent shall be men. The Synod Council shall also seek to ensure that the requirements or goals set forth in Sections 5.01(e) and 5.01(f) are performed or achieved.
- d. Voting membership shall include the officers of the synod.

**10.41.02.** Synods may establish processes that permit retired rostered ministers, or those granted disability status, on the roster of the synod to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, consistent with bylaw 10.41.01.

**10.41.03.** Synods may establish processes that permit rostered ministers who are on leave from call on the roster of the synod to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, consistent with bylaw 10.41.01.

**10.41.04.** Synods may establish processes that permit representatives of synod-authorized worshiping communities, under bylaw 10.01.04., to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, consistent with bylaw 10.41.01.

**10.41.05.** Synods may establish processes that permit Synod Council voting members who are not otherwise serving as voting members of the Synod Assembly the privilege of both voice and vote as members of the Synod Assembly.

#### **10.50. SYNOD COUNCIL**

**10.51. Each synod shall have a Synod Council, which shall be its board of directors, and which shall serve as the interim legislative authority between meetings of the Synod Assembly, except that it may not take any action which is reserved exclusively for the Synod Assembly or which is in conflict with action taken by the Synod Assembly.**

**10.52. The Synod Council shall consist of the four officers of the synod, 10 to 24 other members, at least one young adult, and at least one youth, all elected by the Synod Assembly. Each person elected to the Synod Council shall be a voting member of a congregation of the synod, with the exception of ministers on a roster of the synod who reside outside the territory of the synod. The process for election and the term of office when not otherwise specified herein shall be determined by each synod. A member of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America from the synod, 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.**

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#### **10.80. CONFERENCE OF BISHOPS**

**10.81. The Conference of Bishops shall be composed of the bishops of the synods, the presiding bishop of this church, and the secretary of this church.**

**10.81.01.** The Conference of Bishops shall consult with and advise the Church Council. It may make recommendations to the presiding bishop of this church and to the Church Council, respond to referrals from the Church Council, and refer

concerns and proposals to the Church Council. At each meeting the Conference of Bishops shall receive a report from the Church Council brought by the vice president of this church.

**10.81.02.** The conference shall meet at least two times each year.

**10.81.03.** The responsibilities of the Conference of Bishops shall be enumerated in a continuing resolution. The resolution may be amended by majority vote of the Churchwide Assembly or by a two-thirds vote of the Church Council. Should the conference disagree with the action of the Church Council, it may appeal the decision to the Churchwide Assembly.

**10.81.A16. *Responsibilities of the Conference of Bishops***

*The Conference of Bishops of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall provide opportunities for worship, spiritual renewal, and theological enrichment for those elected to the office of bishop of a synod, the presiding bishop of this church, and the secretary of this church, and it shall offer advice and counsel to the Church Council and the churchwide organization. To fulfill these responsibilities, the Conference of Bishops shall:*

- a. be a forum in which goals, objectives, and strategies may be developed and shared concerning pastoral leadership, care, and counsel for the synods;*
- b. review recommendations from the appropriate churchwide unit or office pertaining to standards for the admission to the rosters of this church, and for their retention on those rosters;*
- c. review recommendations and foster programs, in consultation with the appropriate churchwide unit or office, pertaining to policies related to ministers of Word and Sacrament, and ministers of Word and Service, and their families for pastoral care in such areas as call review, guidance, mobility, intervention, discipline, rehabilitation, and spiritual growth;*
- d. work with the appropriate churchwide unit or office in the processes for first call for candidates for the ministry of Word and Sacrament of this church, first call for candidates for the ministry of Word and Service of this church, mobility of rostered ministers, and pastoral care;*
- e. offer programs for orientation and continuing education for bishops, officers, and their spouses;*
- f. assist the bishops in their role as teachers by being a forum for serious reflections on the theological and ethical implications of issues that affect the life of this church;*
- g. participate in the development and study of ecumenical documents and assist the bishops to promote the unity of this church through leadership and ecumenical worship, fellowship, and interaction; ~~and~~*
- h. assist the bishops in their role as leaders in fostering support for the work of this church by being a forum for discussion of annual mission-support plans and serving as a means of providing advice and counsel to the Church Council in the council's responsibility for approval of those plans; ~~and~~*
- i. assist the bishops and the churchwide organization in implementing the 2019 DEIA Recommendations and the Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards, and encouraging synods and congregations to embrace and implement the same (as applicable).*

**10.81.B14. *Organization of the Conference of Bishops***

*The Conference of Bishops may establish committees as the members, from time to time, may determine to assist in fulfillment of assigned responsibilities. Quadrennially, the Conference of Bishops shall elect a chair and vice chair to preside at meetings and serve as ex officio members of the executive committee of the conference with the presiding bishop and secretary. The Conference of Bishops shall establish criteria and terms for three synod bishops to be elected by the conference as members of the executive committee.*

**10.81.C20. *Staff Services for the Conference of Bishops***

*Staff services for meetings of the Conference of Bishops shall be provided by the Office of the Secretary. The executive for synod relations shall coordinate the operation of the Conference of Bishops.*

**Chapter 11.**

**CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION—DEFINITION AND PURPOSES**

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**11.20. PURPOSES OF THE CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION**

**11.21. In fulfillment of the purposes of this church, the churchwide organization shall:**

- a. Undergird the worship life of this church as the Word of God is preached and the sacraments are administered.**
- b. Provide resources to equip members to worship, learn, serve, and witness in their ministry in daily life.**
- c. Support and establish policy for this church's mission and coordinate planning and evaluation for that mission throughout the world, including participation with other churches.**
- d. Witness to the Word of God in Christ by united efforts in proclaiming the Gospel, responding to human need, caring for the sick and suffering, working for justice and peace, and providing guidance to members on social matters.**
- e. Foster interdependent relationships among congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization to implement the mission of this whole church.**

- f. Provide for the rostered ministries for this church.
- g. Oversee and establish policy for this church's relationship to seminaries, colleges, universities, schools, and other education endeavors, and provide support as appropriate.
- h. Establish and reflect this church's ecumenical stance and its relationship to other churches, and direct this church's policy for relationship with persons of other faiths.
- i. Develop and administer policies for this church's relationship to social ministry organizations and cooperate with public and private agencies that enhance human dignity and justice.
- j. Determine and implement policy for this church's relationship to governments.
- k. Provide for a comprehensive financial support system for this church's mission and for the administration of financial resources necessary for fulfillment of the particular responsibilities of the churchwide organization.
- l. Provide planned giving opportunities for the financial support of this church, its congregations, synods, agencies, and institutions through the establishment of a foundation.
- m. Provide pension and other benefits plans for this church.
- n. Provide a church publishing house.
- o. Provide archives for the retention of its valuable records, and coordinate archival activity in the synods, regions, institutions, and agencies of this church.
- p. Provide and monitor a system of discipline, appeals, and adjudication.
- q. Establish and operate other programs and activities, as determined by this church, on behalf of and in support of the congregations and synods of this church.

11.21.A2X The churchwide organization shall help synods and congregations develop plans and processes to satisfy the Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards and implement the 2019 DEIA Recommendations, to the extent such Standards and Recommendations are embraced by such synods and congregations.

**11.30. DESCRIPTION OF THE CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION**

**11.31. The legislative function of the churchwide organization shall be fulfilled by the Churchwide Assembly as described in Chapter 12 of this constitution.**

**11.32. The Church Council shall exercise interim legislative authority and shall serve as the board of directors of the churchwide organization.**

**11.33. Leadership of this church shall be vested in the churchwide officers, the Churchwide Assembly, the Church Council, the Conference of Bishops, and executive directors of churchwide units. The full-time officers shall be the presiding bishop, secretary, and treasurer. The vice president shall serve as chair of the Church Council, may perform such other tasks for the benefit of this church as the Church Council directs, and may be compensated as the Church Council determines.**

**11.34. The churchwide organization shall carry out its duties through units and offices. Units and offices shall be responsible to the Churchwide Assembly and to the Church Council in the interim between regular meetings of the assembly.**

**11.34.01. Proxy and absentee voting shall not be permitted in the actions of boards, committees, task forces, or other decision-making bodies.**

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**Chapter 12.  
CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY**

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**12.40. MEMBERS OF THE CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY**

**12.41. The voting members of the Churchwide Assembly shall be the voting members of this corporation. The requirements for voting members of the assembly and other members shall be specified in the bylaws.**

**12.41.10. VOTING MEMBERS**

**12.41.11. Each synod shall elect one voting member of the Churchwide Assembly for every 6,000 baptized members in the synod. In addition, each synod shall elect one voting member for every 50 congregations in the synod. The synod bishop, who is *ex officio* a member of the Churchwide Assembly, shall be included in the number of voting members so determined. Unless otherwise determined by the synod, the synod vice president shall serve as an *ex officio* member of the Churchwide Assembly and be included in the number of the synod's voting members. The voting members elected by each synod shall comply with the principles of organization, commitment to inclusiveness, and interdependence commitment to inclusiveness, diversity, equity, accessibility and interdependence as specified in Chapter 5 of this Constitution.**

~~In addition, each synod shall elect one additional voting member who is a youth or young adult at the time of the election and one additional voting member who is a person of color or a person whose primary language is other than English. In addition, each synod shall elect at least (i) one additional voting member who is a youth or young adult at the time of election, (ii) one additional voting member who is a Person of Color, (iii) one additional voting member who is a Non-Primary English Speaking Person, and (iv) one additional voting member who is a member of an Historically Underrepresented Group other than a Person of Color or a Non-Primary English Speaking person.~~ The Church Council may allocate up to 10 additional voting members among synods, but no single synod may be allocated more than two additional voting members. The secretary shall notify each synod of the number of assembly members it is to elect.

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## Chapter 14. CHURCH COUNCIL

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### 14.20. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CHURCH COUNCIL

#### 14.21. **The specific duties of the Church Council shall be listed in the bylaws.**

- 14.21.01. The Church Council shall act on the policies proposed by churchwide units, when requested by the presiding bishop or the churchwide unit. The Church Council shall ensure that the actions of the Churchwide Assembly are implemented by the applicable unit or office.
- 14.21.02. The Church Council shall receive from the Office of the Presiding Bishop regular reports on the programs and procedures of the churchwide units. The Church Council, through the presiding bishop, shall ensure that the purposes, policies and objectives of this church are being fulfilled.
- Specific policies identified in this constitution and bylaws, developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, and reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, shall be submitted to the Church Council for approval.
  - Separately incorporated ministries of this church, as defined in Chapter 17, shall submit a report to the Church Council on their policies and programs. The Church Council shall act to approve those policies and programs as required in this constitution and bylaws.
- 14.21.03. The Church Council shall review all recommendations from churchwide units for possible consideration by the Churchwide Assembly and determine which, if any, should be forwarded to the Churchwide Assembly for action.
- 14.21.04. The Church Council may adopt policies in accord with this church's constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.
- 14.21.05. The Church Council, upon recommendation of the presiding bishop, shall submit budget proposals for approval by the Churchwide Assembly and authorize expenditures within the parameters of approved budgets.
- 14.21.06. The Church Council shall adopt personnel policies for the churchwide organization. Salary structures of churchwide units shall be within the personnel policies of the churchwide organization, unless exceptions are granted by the Church Council. The Church Council shall work with the Office of the Presiding Bishop and the churchwide organization in striving to attain diversity within churchwide organization personnel, such that at least 10 percent of persons working for the churchwide organization are Persons of Color and/or a Non-Primary English Speaking person; and an additional 10 percent are from Historically Underrepresented Groups other than Persons of Color and Non-Primary English Speaking persons.
- 14.21.07. The Church Council shall report its actions to the Churchwide Assembly.

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### 14.40. CHURCH COUNCIL COMMITTEES

#### 14.41. **The Church Council shall establish committees and nominate or elect such persons as necessary to carry out the functions assigned to it. The description of such committees shall be set forth in the bylaws and continuing resolutions.**

- 14.41.01. **Executive Committee.** The Church Council shall have an Executive Committee composed of the churchwide officers, the chair of the Conference of Bishops, and eight members of the Church Council elected by the council. The vice president of this church shall chair this committee. The Executive Committee shall:
- perform those functions of the Church Council assigned to it by the Church Council, which shall include acting for the Church Council between meetings of the council;
  - transmit resolutions from synods to the appropriate unit or units of the churchwide organization;
  - fulfill the responsibilities of the Church Council related to nominations, with staff services for the nomination and election processes of the Church Council provided by the Office of the Secretary;
  - provide advice and counsel for the officers;
  - review the work of the officers and, with the absence of the salaried officers from such deliberations, set salaries of the presiding bishop, secretary, and treasurer within the ranges established by the Church Council;



- f. demonstrate concern for the spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being of the officers of this church; and
- g. when necessary, serve as members of the U.S.A. National Committee of The Lutheran World Federation.

**14.41.02.** Liaison bishops, ecumenical guests, and other advisors to the Church Council may serve as advisory members to the council's committees with voice but not vote.

**14.41.A15. Budget and Finance Committee**

*A Budget and Finance Committee shall be composed of members of the Church Council elected by the council. The treasurer of this church shall serve as an ex officio member of the committee. This committee shall have staff services provided by the Office of the Presiding Bishop and the Office of the Treasurer. The committee shall prepare and present a comprehensive budget to the Church Council for its consideration and presentation to the Churchwide Assembly. The committee shall relate to the work of the Office of the Treasurer.*

**14.41.B22. Christian Community and Leadership Committee**

*A Christian Community and Leadership Committee shall be composed of members of the Church Council elected by the council. This committee shall relate to the work of the Christian Community and Leadership unit, and have staff services provided by the Christian Community and Leadership unit. This committee shall receive reports from the Christian Community and Leadership unit, act upon policies and strategies recommended from this unit to the Church Council, and provide periodic review of this unit.*

**14.41.C22. Faith, Society, and Innovation Committee**

*A Faith, Society, and Innovation Committee shall be composed of members of the Church Council elected by the council. This committee shall relate to the work of the Office of the Presiding Bishop and the Innovation unit, and have staff services provided by the Office of the Presiding Bishop and the Innovation unit. This committee shall assist the presiding bishop in coordinated, strategic planning for the work of the churchwide organization. Further, in consultation with the executive for administration, this committee shall evaluate and report annually to the Church Council and to the Churchwide Assembly on how the churchwide organization complies with and implements commitments and policies adopted by the Churchwide Assembly and the Church Council. This committee shall be responsible for reviewing policies related to ecumenical, inter-Lutheran, and inter-religious activities, and make recommendations to the Church Council and the Churchwide Assembly. It shall provide ongoing review of the development of this church's social teaching documents and act upon recommendations from the Office of the Presiding Bishop. All churchwide policies and strategies recommended by the Office of the Presiding Bishop that have implications for congregations, synods, other churchwide units, or institutions and agencies of this church shall be considered by this committee for recommendation to the Church Council. This committee also shall receive reports from the Innovation unit, act upon policies recommended from the Innovation unit to the Church Council, and provide periodic review of the Innovation unit. This Committee shall also review and oversee the development and implementation of, and monitor the progress on, (i) all Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards for the churchwide organization, synods and congregations, and (ii) the 2019 DEIA Recommendations.*

**14.41.D22. Legal and Constitutional Review Committee**

*A Legal and Constitutional Review Committee shall be composed of members of the Church Council elected by the council. The secretary of this church shall serve as an ex officio member of the committee. This committee shall have staff services provided by the Office of the Secretary. This committee shall provide ongoing review of legal and constitutional matters. It shall review all proposed amendments to the constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.*

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**Chapter 15.**

**CHURCHWIDE ADMINISTRATION AND OFFICES**

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**15.12. OFFICE OF THE PRESIDING BISHOP**

**15.12.01.** Responsibilities of the Office of the Presiding Bishop, in addition to those specified in the bylaws, shall be set forth in continuing resolutions.

**15.12.A22. Responsibilities of the Executive for Administration**

*The executive for administration shall be accountable to the presiding bishop and shall serve as chief administrator of the churchwide organization. The executive for administration shall be elected by the Church Council upon nomination of the presiding bishop and shall serve coterminous with the term of the presiding bishop. At the direction of the presiding bishop, the executive for administration shall:*

- a. supervise the day-to-day functioning of the churchwide organization and coordinate the work of churchwide units;
- b. facilitate the interdependent functioning of churchwide units in the fulfillment of the responsibilities assigned to them;

- c. coordinate the strategic planning and day-to-day staff activities within the Office of the Presiding Bishop and the functioning of the administrative team;
- d. develop the budget for the churchwide organization and report to the Church Council and the Churchwide Assembly through the Budget and Finance Committee of the Church Council with regard to the preparation of the budget;
- e. provide staff services and documentation to the Faith, Society, and Innovation Committee and the Board Development Committee of the Church Council.
- f. oversee churchwide strategic communications, including branding, messaging, and content development; and
- g. provide for building management and coordinate central services for the churchwide organization.

**15.12.B21. Responsibility for Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations**

Responsibility for ecumenical and inter-religious relations shall be exercised by the Office of the Presiding Bishop.

- a. The presiding bishop shall appoint an executive who shall coordinate the ecumenical, inter-Lutheran, and inter-religious activities of this church, and shall recommend, through the presiding bishop, policies to the Church Council and the Churchwide Assembly. To fulfill these responsibilities, the executive shall:
  - 1) assist the presiding bishop of this church in carrying out the presiding bishop's role as the chief ecumenical officer of this church;
  - 2) administer the ecumenical, inter-Lutheran, and inter-religious discussions (including bilateral dialogues) in which this church is involved;
  - 3) provide active support of the membership of this church in ecumenical organizations, such as World Council of Churches, National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., and The Lutheran World Federation;
  - 4) guide the process of reception of theological agreements and give advice in matters of fellowship and unity with other Lutheran churches; and
  - 5) assist synods, congregations, and churchwide units in carrying out their ecumenical, inter-Lutheran, and inter-religious responsibilities by giving guidance and by preparing guidelines for action.
- b. From time to time as necessary, the Executive Committee of the Church Council shall convene as the U.S.A. National Committee of The Lutheran World Federation. The U.S.A. National Committee also consists of the members of this church who serve as voting members of the council of The Lutheran World Federation. An ELCA advisor to the council of The Lutheran World Federation and/or the executive for ecumenical and inter-religious relations shall serve as consultants to the U.S.A. National Committee of The Lutheran World Federation.
- c. Ecumenical representatives shall be chosen by the presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in consultation with the Executive Committee of the Church Council. These representatives include members of delegations to national and international inter-church entities in which this church holds membership and members of inter-Lutheran, inter-faith, and ecumenical discussions, including bilateral dialogues and conversations, in which this church participates. All such appointments shall be reported to the Church Council as information.

**15.12.C21. Responsibility for People Solutions and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**

Responsibility for people solutions and ~~diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility~~ diversity, equity, and inclusion shall be exercised by the Office of the Presiding Bishop, which shall develop and manage the personnel policies and procedures for the churchwide organization, including policies and procedures regarding equal-employment opportunity; recruitment, interview, and selection of staff; compensation and benefits; employee-assistance programs; just and equitable employee-relations practices; performance evaluation; maintenance of personnel records; and training. In accordance with bylaw 14.21.06., the Church Council shall adopt personnel policies upon recommendation of the Office of the Presiding Bishop. The presiding bishop shall appoint an executive who shall be responsible for people solutions and this church's commitment to ~~diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility~~ diversity, equity, and inclusion.

**15.12.D21. Responsibility for Theological Discernment**

Responsibility shall be exercised in the Office of the Presiding Bishop for serving the Church's theological work by promoting, coordinating, and facilitating theological discernment of the Church's message and its theological foundations in collaboration with all who share in the responsibilities to be teachers of the faith in the Church, including the Conference of Bishops, the seminary faculties, the convocation of teaching theologians, networks such as Lutheran ethicists and women theologians, the editorial staff of the publishing ministry and publications, and all rostered ministers. ~~This responsibility for serving the Church's theological work also shall encompass theological work in and commitment to discern, understand, and respond to racism, classism, sexism, discrimination against and injustice towards members of Historically Underrepresented Groups, and issues of justice for women in the Church and society in order to advance full participation, equal opportunity and justice for all. This responsibility for serving the Church's theological work also shall encompass theological work in and commitment to discern, understand, and respond to racism, classism, and sexism and issues of justice for women in the Church and in society in order to advance full participation, equal opportunity, and justice for all.~~ To fulfill these responsibilities, the presiding bishop shall appoint an executive who will assist the presiding bishop and coordinate the service of staff groups that provide theological resources and assistance in programmatic implementation.

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## Chapter 16.

### UNITS OF THE CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION

#### 16.10. CHURCHWIDE UNITS

16.11. **A unit of the churchwide organization is assigned leadership responsibility for major, identified portions of the mission and ministry of this church.**

16.11.A21. *As it pertains to the churchwide organization, a unit may also be described as a home area.*

16.11.01. In conformity with this church's commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility, and in order to model best practices for DEIA in the realm of recruiting, hiring and promotion of staff for congregations and synods, the churchwide organization shall (i) seek a balance of men and women and persons from Historically Underrepresented Groups to work as staff within the churchwide organization; (ii) proactively recruit women and persons from Historically Underrepresented Groups to apply for staff positions within the churchwide organization; and (iii) provide meaningful and frequent mentoring and training opportunities equally to all staff persons, including women and persons from Historically Underrepresented Groups, to enable them to qualify and be selected for positions of greater responsibility or leadership within the churchwide organization. ~~In conformity with this church's commitment to inclusive practice, churchwide units and offices will assure that staff include a balance of women and men, persons of color and persons whose primary language is other than English, laypersons, and rostered ministers.~~

#### 16.11.B20. **Identity of Units**

*Units of the churchwide organization, which shall function through cooperation, coordination, and collaboration, are the following:*

- a. *Christian Community and Leadership unit;*
- b. *Innovation unit;*
- c. *Operations unit; and*
- d. *Service and Justice unit.*

*Each unit, except the Operations unit, shall have an executive director.*

16.12. **Each unit shall report to the Churchwide Assembly and will report to the Church Council in the interim.**

16.12.01. The responsibilities of the units shall be described in continuing resolutions.

16.12.02. Executive directors of each unit shall be appointed by the presiding bishop to a four-year term. The presiding bishop, as chief executive officer, shall arrange within the personnel policies of the churchwide organization for an annual review of each executive director. A unit executive director shall be eligible for re-appointment. The employment of the executive director may be terminated in accordance with the personnel policies of the churchwide organization.

#### 16.12.A21. **Responsibilities of the Christian Community and Leadership Unit**

*The Christian Community and Leadership unit shall foster and facilitate the work of synods, congregations, the churchwide organization, and others in reaching and welcoming more people into the Christian faith. It energizes and engages the core membership and works with the whole of this church to recruit, develop, and deploy lay and rostered leadership to fulfill the Church's purpose. It works across all expressions of this church to accomplish these goals domestically and internationally. This unit shall:*

- a. *create and revitalize congregations and ministries;*
- b. *enhance evangelism and discipleship;*
- c. oversee the development of multicultural ministries and collaborate on the commitment of this church to diversity, equity inclusion and accessibility, including by assisting in the implementation of the Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards and the 2019 DEIA Recommendations throughout the churchwide organization and in those congregations and synods who consent to be bound by such standards and recommendations; ~~oversee the development of multicultural ministries and collaborate on the commitment of this church to diversity and inclusivity;~~
- d. *support efforts to reach new people, young people, and to become more economically diverse;*
- e. *foster relationships with educational institutions, including participation in and support of the Network of Colleges and Universities of this church;*
- f. *recruit, train, and help to deploy lay and rostered leaders;*
- g. *support the candidacy and assignment processes;*
- h. *coordinate the work of Young Adults in Global Mission and the ELCA Youth Gathering;*
- i. *oversee the chaplaincies of this church in domestic specialized ministry settings as well as federal chaplaincies both at home and abroad; and*
- j. *support the worship ministry of this church by overseeing the development and review of worship resources intended for use throughout this church, and recommend, through the presiding bishop, policies related to worship and sacramental practices to the Church Council and the Churchwide Assembly.*

*This unit shall relate to Lutheran Men in Mission, National Lutheran Campus Ministry, Inc., Educational and Institutional Insurance Administrators, Inc., and the Evangelical Lutheran Education Association.*

**16.12.B20. Responsibilities of the Innovation Unit**

*The Innovation unit shall promote, coordinate, and facilitate organizational collaboration, culture, and development, including innovation processes and leadership development for churchwide organization staff, members of this church, and others. This unit shall:*

- a. provide, manage, and design experiments and processes (including related goals, metrics, and measurement) to assist this church to develop and evaluate new and existing programs and initiatives;*
- b. be responsible for leadership development through teaching and promoting innovation culture, skills, and tools within the churchwide organization and throughout this church; and*
- c. equip the churchwide organization and this church to conduct relevant research, data collection, analysis, and evaluation to make data-informed decisions; in collaboration with the Office of the Secretary, provide for required reporting and other items related to policies established by the Church Council and the Churchwide Assembly.*

**16.12.C20. Responsibilities of the Operations Unit**

*The Operations unit shall comprise the following:*

- a. the Office of the Presiding Bishop;*
- b. the Office of the Secretary; and*
- c. the Office of the Treasurer.*

**16.12.D21. Responsibilities of the Service and Justice Unit**

*The Service and Justice unit shall foster and facilitate this church's engagement in service and promote efforts to call and act for justice. It shall engage in mission, service, and justice in accompaniment with churches and organizations in other countries; serve as the means through which churches in other countries engage in mission to this church and society; engage with communities, coalitions and networks, congregations, and synods in service and justice work within the territorial jurisdiction of this church; and provide guidance to members on matters of social justice.*

*The Service and Justice unit shall support the freedom of Christians to love and serve their neighbor through the following areas:*

- a. Peoples and Communities: maintain global church-to-church relationships and mutual endeavors for evangelical witness and sharing of mission personnel; oversee the work of the ethnic specific ministries and collaborate on multicultural ministries and the commitment of this church to diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility ~~diversity and inclusivity~~;*
- b. Building Resilient Communities: meet human need and enhance human dignity; work to overturn oppression and injustice; and engage collaboratively toward the flourishing of human community and creation through advocacy, development, and disaster response programming internationally and domestically; and*
- c. Witness in Society: empower members to engage with systems and processes to promote the well-being of the human community and creation in the public square, local and federal government, and the international community; equip and encourage members to seek dignity and peace; advance justice in response to human suffering, marginalization, and exclusion; and promote equality, justice, and respect for the value of every person to reduce the systemic injustices impacting communities and societies; to advance corporate social responsibility through environmental, social, and justice principles to create a just and sustainable society.*

*The Service and Justice unit shall relate to those Independent Lutheran Organizations and other social ministries that engage in efforts related to service, justice, and global mission; the service, justice, and global mission efforts of full communion churches; and the Deaconess Community of the ELCA.*

*The Service and Justice Unit shall develop personnel policies for long-term and other missionaries in consultation with the Office of the Presiding Bishop and administer such policies after their approval by the Church Council.*

**Chapter 17.**

**SEPARATELY INCORPORATED MINISTRIES**

**17.10. This church may fulfill some of its purposes, as described in Chapter 4, through separately incorporated ministries.**

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**17.40. This church shall have a separately incorporated ministry, the Publishing House of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, to carry out the publishing ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The president of the corporation shall serve as its chief executive officer.**

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**17.40.A19. Responsibilities of the Publishing House of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

*The Publishing House of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America— also known as 1517 Media—shall:*

- a. *be responsible for the publishing, production, and distribution of publications to be sold to accomplish the mission of this church.*
- b. *work in close cooperation with congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization to provide a diversity of published resources.*
- c. *work with churchwide units to plan the publication of materials to assist congregations in fulfilling their life in mission.*
- d. *develop, produce, and distribute materials required to carry out its functions.*
- e. *be financed from the sale and distribution of materials, not from the budget of this church.*
- f. *create, develop, and publish a diversity of resources in various media; make available other publications, materials, and church supplies; produce official documents and publications of this church; and produce materials in a manner that assures their ready availability.*
- g. *provide for the wide distribution of resources within and beyond this church.*
- h. *manage its finances and other resources in a manner that assures the continuity and extension of its activities. This publishing house shall maintain its own accounting, information technology, human resources, employee benefits, and other functions essential to a cohesive, efficient, and effective operation.*
- i. ~~*identify and nurture diverse and talented authors, composers, artists and others in creating various media, including authors, composers and artists from Historically Underrepresented Groups identify and nurture talented authors, composers, artists, and others involved in creating various media.*~~
- j. *distribute the church periodical in accord with provisions of this church's constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.*
- k. *determine its necessary financial reserves, appropriations, and publishing subsidies.*
- l. *make available resources to meet unique language and cultural needs, as feasible.*
- m. *Assist synods, congregations and the churchwide organization in finding and utilizing published materials to help them achieve their respective Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards, as applicable, including by creating and maintaining a database of books, articles and other written materials (i) written by authors from Historically Underrepresented Groups, or (ii) addressing issues generally of concern or unique to Historically Underrepresented Groups, including their unique history, suffering they have endured and how it might be healed, the role of their faith in Jesus Christ as part of their history, and ways in which they are prepared to work with other groups within the church to eradicate barriers to their full inclusion in church life and culture.*

**17.50. This church shall have a separately incorporated ministry, known as Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, to assist its women to commit themselves to full discipleship, affirm their gifts, and support each other in their particular callings.**

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## **Chapter 18. REGIONS**

**18.01. This church shall have regions as an association among nine specific groups of synods and the churchwide organization for the purpose of exercising mutual responsibilities for mission and ministry throughout this church.**

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**18.01.B19.** *In fulfilling the region's function and the purposes of this church, each region may assist in:*

- a. *planning for this church's participation in God's mission in the region, with special attention to the opportunities for outreach with the Gospel;*
- b. *providing for ongoing dialogue between the synods of the region and churchwide units for the purpose of identifying functions that may be done together;*
- c. *forming resource planning groups to recommend resources and services needed for congregations;*
- d. *facilitating, when requested, relationships with colleges, universities, and campus ministries and supportive funding responsibilities of the synods and churchwide organization on behalf of colleges, universities, and campus ministries;*
- e. *facilitating gatherings of synod bishops, synod staff, and regional staff; and*
- f. *coordinating the work of the churchwide staff within the territory of the region.*

**18.01.C91.** *Additional functions may include:*

- a. *relating to seminaries;*
- b. *relating to camps and other outdoor ministries;*
- c. *developing communication plans and projects;*
- d. *planning for and coordinating continuing education programs;*
- e. *providing for various services to congregations;*

- f. *facilitating global mission education and interpretation;*
- g. *providing for stewardship and evangelism events;*
- h. *providing for events for the growth and equipping of God's people for their ministries in the world;*
- i. *compiling lists of personnel that may be used by synods for interim ministries;*
- j. *providing a financial service bureau for the cooperating synods for banking, payroll, accounts payable, and accounts receivable;*
- k. *providing for regional archives, associated with institutions of this church wherever possible;*
- l. *coordinating resources for youth ministry;*
- m. *assisting synods in facilitating the mobility of rostered ministers;*
- n. *facilitating, when requested, relationships with social ministry organizations and assisting in advocacy work; and*
- o. *addressing other functions, as deemed appropriate by synods and the churchwide organization.*

**18.01.C2X** *Each synod is encouraged to, as soon as practicable, implement the Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards and the 2019 DEIA Recommendations that apply to synods.*

## Chapter 19.

### NOMINATIONS AND ELECTION PROCESS

**19.01.** **The Churchwide Assembly shall elect the presiding bishop, vice president, and secretary of this church and such other persons as the constitution and bylaws may require, according to procedures set forth in the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.**

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**19.11.** Further procedures relating to nominations may be set forth in the bylaws and continuing resolutions.

**19.11.01.** The Nominating Committee shall consist of 12–18 members elected by the Churchwide Assembly. Each member shall be elected to one six-year term and shall serve until a successor is elected. Members of the Nominating Committee shall not be eligible for consecutive re-election. The Church Council shall place in nomination the names of two persons for each position. The committee shall consist of at least one member but no more than three members from any region. Nominations from the floor shall also be permitted, but each floor nomination shall be presented in the specific category named by the Church Council and shall therefore meet the same criteria as the persons against whom the nominee is nominated. In the materials provided in advance to each member of the assembly, the Church Council shall set forth the specific criteria applicable to each category that must be met by persons nominated from the floor.

**19.11.02.** Except as otherwise provided, the Nominating Committee shall nominate two persons for each council or committee position, according to the process described in continuing resolutions, for which an election will be held by the Churchwide Assembly. Nominations from the floor, where permitted in the nomination process, shall be presented in the specific category named by the Nominating Committee and shall therefore meet the same criteria as the persons against whom the nominee is nominated. In the materials provided in advance to each member of the assembly, the Nominating Committee shall set forth the specific criteria applicable to each category that must be met by persons nominated from the floor.

**19.11.03.** The Nominating Committee shall nominate at least one person for each position on the board of trustees of each of the separately incorporated ministries identified in Chapter 17 of this constitution, according to the process described in continuing resolutions, for which an election will be held by the Churchwide Assembly. In the case of re-election, if authorized, or for nominees from church bodies with which this church is in a relationship of full communion, only one person need be nominated. Nominations from the floor, where permitted in the nomination process, shall be presented in the specific category named by the Nominating Committee and shall therefore meet the same criteria as the persons against whom the nominee is nominated. In the materials provided in advance to each member of the assembly, the Nominating Committee shall set forth the specific criteria applicable to each category that must be met by persons nominated from the floor.

**19.11.04.** In each case in which there are floor nominations, there shall be a preliminary ballot that shall include the names of the nominees presented by the Nominating Committee or the Church Council, and the person or persons nominated from the floor, where permitted. The names of the two persons receiving the highest number of votes cast shall be placed on the final ballot.

**19.11.05.** The Church Council shall endeavor to ensure that every synod has at least one person serving on the Church Council or churchwide boards, committees, task forces, or other groups. Among those persons elected by the assembly, excluding the officers, no more than two persons from any one synod shall serve on the Church Council or any one board, committee, task force, or other group.

**19.11.06.** The Nominating Committee shall strive to ensure that all persons nominated for any position, including the boards of separately incorporated ministries, possess the necessary competence and experience for the position. All persons elected

to any position, whether nominated by the Nominating Committee or not, shall strive to represent this church and not just a particular geographic area, and further shall be able to credibly demonstrate (i) a proven commitment to increasing diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility within the churchwide organization, the synods and the congregations, (ii) their role in mentoring persons from Historically Underrepresented Groups into leadership positions within the church, and (iii) the role they played, if any, in the implementation of the 2019 DEIA Recommendations and the Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards at the level of the churchwide organization, the synods and/or the congregations.

**19.11.A21. Churchwide Assembly Nominations Desk and Nominations Form**

- a. *Nominations from the floor at the Churchwide Assembly shall be made at the Nominations Desk, which shall be maintained under the supervision of the secretary of this church.*
- b. *A nomination from the floor shall be made by using the form provided by the secretary of this church. Nomination forms may be obtained from the Nominations Desk at times prescribed in the assembly's Rules of Organization and Procedure.*
- c. ~~*The required form to be used in making nominations from the floor shall include the nominee's name, address, phone number, lay or rostered status, white or person of color or primary language other than English status, congregational membership, synod membership, and affirmation of willingness to serve, if elected; the name, address, and synod membership of the voting member who is making the nomination; and such other information as the secretary of this church shall require.*~~ *The required form to be used in making nominations from the floor shall include the nominee's name, address, phone number, lay or rostered status, congregational membership, synod membership, and affirmation of willingness to serve, if elected. It shall also (i) list each category of Historically Underrepresented Groups so that the nominee may, at their option, indicate which group, if any, such nominee identifies with, (ii) require the nominee to identify at least one person from an Historically Underrepresented Group whom they mentored within the past 2 years, and (iii) request generally that the nominee describe, in detail, the specific role they played in at least the immediately preceding 2 years advancing the 2019 DEIA Recommendations and helping the churchwide organization, any synod or congregation implement the applicable Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards. The form shall provide the name, address, and synod membership of the voting member who is making the nomination, along with such other information as the secretary of this church shall require.*
- d. *For purposes of nomination procedures, "synod membership" means:*
  - 1) *In the case of a layperson who is not on the roster of this church, the synod that includes the congregation in which such person holds membership; and*
  - 2) *In the case of a rostered minister, the synod on whose roster such minister's name is maintained.*

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Evangelical  
Lutheran Church  
in America

# CONSTITUTION FOR SYNODS

*Current as of November 2022*

## 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.

†S6.01A. The Church reflects the fullness of the character and values expressed and lived by Jesus Christ, and this synod's practices and policies must therefore be determined by that character and those values. The Church identifies Jesus' character and values based on its relationship with Jesus Christ, and application of His Word, and not by the culture or the world. Any practices or policies of this synod which conflict with Jesus' character and values must and shall be confronted, challenged and adjusted to conform to that character and those values. The character and values of Jesus include:

- a. Viewing the entire church as part of the body of Christ, not a mere building or another organization or an extension of any other institution in society.
- b. Valuing each person within that body equally as others, so that if one person feels or is viewed as weaker they must be made to feel indispensable.
- c. Sharing power and decision-making within the organization so that persons who would otherwise feel devalued or marginalized due to race, class, status, gender, sexual orientation, language or other barrier not wholly within their control are given power to control the development of their potential within the church.
- d. Sharing in the suffering of those who have been made to feel, or believe themselves to be, the least significant within or unwelcome by the church, including on account of any characteristic they possess but neither chose nor control, so that if one suffers all others suffer with him or her as well, and all in the church endeavor daily to remedy that suffering.



- e. Loving, empowering and serving all of the marginalized.
- f. Opposing racism and racial supremacy in all its forms, and superseding geographic, ethnic and tribal barriers to share the love of Jesus Christ with those even radically different than ourselves, so that all congregants, wherever located and whatever race, experience inclusion in the loving body of Jesus Christ,
- g. Showing grace to those who have been accused of or are engaged in sin, while at the same time respecting the authority of Scripture and holiness, and never equating holiness with hatred.
- h. Avoiding hypocrisy, including the selective enforcement of applicable Scriptural moral mandates or prohibitions.
- i. Correcting systems which induce spiritual corruption in individuals or cause needless suffering, including on those who have historically been excluded from full participation in the Church.
- j. Respecting and debating diversity of opinions within the church, including on divisive social issues, without destroying the church.
- k. Promoting justice for those experiencing oppression within groups of larger society.
- l. Telling the truth and refusing to validate lies.

**†S6.01B.** Since this synod must reflect the character and values of Jesus Christ, its policies and practices designed to promote DEIA must therefore be rooted in but also limited by that character and such values, including as expressed in Section 6.01A above. DEIA, as a policy, shall not be fundamentally determined by any other source of authority or influence, such as political affiliation or secular ideology, culture, academia or media. In the event of a conflict between this synod's DEIA policy and any of these other sources of authority or influence, DEIA policy derived from the character and values of Jesus Christ must and shall prevail. This synod acknowledges, however, that there may be overlap between the synod's DEIA policy based on the character and values of Jesus Christ and similar policies espoused by well-intentioned non-religious sources, which other sources may inform, but not control, the synod's DEIA policy.

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

- a. Proclaim God's saving Gospel of justification by grace for Christ's sake through faith alone, according to the apostolic witness in the Holy Scripture, preserving and transmitting the Gospel faithfully to future generations.
- b. Carry out Christ's Great Commission by reaching out to all people to bring them to faith in Christ and by doing all ministry with a global awareness consistent with the understanding of God as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier of all.
- c. Serve in response to God's love to meet human needs, caring for the sick and the aged, advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations, and standing in solidarity with the poor and oppressed and committing itself to their needs.
- d. Worship God in proclamation of the Word and administration of the sacraments and through lives of prayer, praise, thanksgiving, witness, and service.
- e. Nurture its members in the Word of God so as to grow in faith and hope and love, to see daily life as the primary setting for the exercise of their Christian calling, and to use the gifts of the Spirit for their life together and for their calling in the world.
- f. Manifest the unity given to the people of God by living together in the love of Christ and by joining with other Christians in prayer and action to express and preserve the unity which the Spirit gives.
- g. Welcome and show love and compassion to all persons in the LGBTQIA+ community, who are seeking a relationship with Jesus Christ but may have historically experienced trauma, rejection or even hatred from the church or this synod. This synod will show equal value, respect, love and compassion to all those members of the LGBTQIA+ community whose faith and interpretation of God's Word has led them to avoid acting on sexual attractions proscribed by Scripture, as to those who love The Lord and neither perceive nor experience any inconsistency between their love of Jesus and their sexuality. Such equal respect, love and compassion is not conditioned on whether this synod has taken a particular position on competing proposals at any time under consideration by the church related to sexual ethics or broader issues of concern to the LGBTQIA+ community.
- h. Actively promote Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility in all parts of the synod at all times, including (without limitation) by encouraging congregations in this synod to adopt and diligently implement the 2019 DEIA Recommendations and strive to exceed the Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards. For purposes hereof, this Constitution hereby incorporates by reference the definitions of the following terms as set forth in the Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility  
Historically Underrepresented Groups  
2019 DEIA Recommendations  
Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards.

i. Actively mentor all persons who have been historically underrepresented in positions of leadership within the synod (including members of Historically Underrepresented Groups) so that the clergy and lay leadership in this synod increasingly reflect materially greater diversity than has historically existed.

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

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

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

- a. providing for pastoral care of congregations, ministers of Word and Sacrament, and ministers of Word and Service in the synod, including:
  - 1) approving candidates for rostered ministry in cooperation with the appropriate seminaries of this church, which may be done through multi-synod committees;
  - 2) authorizing ordinations and ordaining rostered ministers on behalf of this church;
  - 3) consulting in the call process for rostered ministers.
- b. providing for leadership recruitment, preparation, and support in accordance with churchwide standards and policies, including:
  - 1) nurturing and supporting congregations and lay leaders;
  - 2) seeking and recruiting qualified candidates for the rostered ministries of this church;
  - 3) making provision for pastoral care, call review, and guidance;
  - 4) encouraging and supporting persons on the rosters of this church in stewardship of their abilities, care of self, and pursuit of continuing education to undergird their effectiveness of service; and
  - 5) supporting recruitment of leaders for this church's colleges, universities, seminaries, and social ministry organizations.
- c. providing for discipline of congregations, ministers of Word and Sacrament, and ministers of Word and Service; as well as for termination of call, appointment, adjudication, and appeals consistent with Chapter 20 of this church's constitution.
- d. providing for archives in conjunction with other synods.
- e. Encourage congregations within the synod to adopt the 2019 DEIA Recommendations and the Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards, and assist congregations in creating and pursuing strategies and programs to implement such recommendations and standards to the extent such congregations choose to do so.

†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;
- g. encouraging congregations to adopt the 2019 DEIA Recommendation and Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards, and assisting consenting congregations in achieving and/or implementing the same.

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

- a. promoting interdependent relationships among congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization, and entering into relationships with other synods in the region;
- b. fostering organizations for youth, women, and men, and organizations for language or ethnic communities and members of Historically Underrepresented Groups;
- c. developing relationships with social ministry organizations and ministries, participating in their mission planning, and providing supportive funding;
- d. supporting relationships with and providing supportive funding on behalf of colleges, universities, and campus ministries;

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

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

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

†S6.04. Except as otherwise provided in this constitution and bylaws, the Synod Council shall establish processes that will ensure that at least 60 percent of the members of the synod assemblies, councils, committees, boards, and other organizational units shall be laypersons; and that, as nearly as possible, at least 45 percent of the lay members of assemblies, councils, committees, boards, or other organizational units shall be women and, as nearly as possible, at least 45 percent shall be men; and that, where possible, the representation of rostered ministers shall include both men and women. ~~This synod shall establish processes that will enable it to reach a minimum goal that 10 percent of its assemblies, councils, committees, boards, or other organizational units be persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English. This synod shall establish processes that will enable it to reach a minimum goal that (i) 10 percent of its assemblies, councils, committees, boards, or other organizational units be Persons of Color and/or Non-Primary English Speaking person, and (ii) an additional 10 percent be persons from Historically Underrepresented Groups other than Persons of Color and Non-Primary English Speaking persons. The synod shall devise and implement a plan to recruit, train and mentor persons from Historically Underrepresented Groups in order to equip them with the skills necessary for serving in leadership positions in the synod as soon as possible.~~

†S6.04.01. It is the goal of this synod that at least 10 percent of the voting members of the Synod Assembly, Synod Council, committees, and organizational units of this synod be youth and young adults. The Synod Council shall establish a plan for implementing this goal. For purposes of the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of this synod, the term “youth” means a voting member of a congregation who has not reached the age of 18 at the time of election or appointment for service. The term “young adult” means a voting member of a congregation between the ages of 18 and 30 at the time of election or appointment for service.

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## Chapter 8. OFFICERS

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

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### S8.40. Treasurer

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

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

- a. Management of the monies and accounts of this synod, its deeds, mortgages, contracts, evidences of claims and revenues, and trust funds, holding the same at all times subject to the order of this synod.
- b. Investment of funds upon the authorization of the Synod Council. The treasurer shall devise and implement a plan, approved by the Synod Council, for increasing annually the percentage of the synod’s overall operating funds that are used in making purchases from vendors or service providers owned by members of Historically Underrepresented Groups.
- c. Receipt and acknowledgment of offerings, contributions, and bequests made to this synod, collecting interest and income from its invested funds, and paying regular appropriations and orders on the several accounts as approved and directed by the Synod Council. The treasurer shall transmit each month to the treasurer of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America the funds received by this synod for the general work of this church as well as any funds to support restricted programs of this church.

- d. Maintenance of a regular account with each congregation of this synod and informing the congregation, at least quarterly, of the status of this account.
- e. Rendering at each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly a full, detailed, and duly audited report of receipts and disbursements in the several accounts of this synod for the preceding fiscal year, together with the tabulation, for record and publication in the minutes, of the contributions from the congregations.

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## Chapter 9.

### NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

- †S9.01. The Synod Assembly shall elect such officers of this synod and such other persons as the constitution and bylaws may require, according to procedures set forth in the bylaws. The Synod Assembly shall elect members of the Churchwide Assembly in accordance with bylaw 12.41.11. of the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- †S9.02. In all elections by the Synod Assembly, other than for the bishop, a majority of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election.
- S9.03. There shall be a Nominating Committee consisting of \_\_\_\_\_ members who shall be appointed by the Synod Council to serve for each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly. Additional nominations may be made from the floor for all elections for which nominations are made by the Nominating Committee.
- S9.04. The bishop shall be elected by the Synod Assembly by ecclesiastical ballot. Three-fourths of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election on the first ballot. If no one is elected, the first ballot shall be considered the nominating ballot. Three-fourths of the legal votes cast on the second ballot shall be necessary for election. The third ballot shall be limited to the seven persons (plus ties) who received the greatest number of legal votes on the second ballot, and two-thirds of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. The fourth ballot shall be limited to the three persons (plus ties) who receive the greatest number of legal votes on the third ballot, and 60 percent of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. On subsequent ballots a majority of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. These ballots shall be limited to the two persons (plus ties) who receive the greatest number of legal votes on the previous ballot.
- S9.05. The Nominating Committee shall nominate at least one person for vice president; additional nominations may be made from the floor.
- S9.06. The Synod Council shall nominate at least one person for secretary; additional nominations may be made from the floor.
- S9.07. If the treasurer is elected, the Synod Council shall nominate at least one person for 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 assembly.
- †S9.10. When notified by the secretary of this church, on behalf of the Nominating Committee of the Churchwide Assembly, the Synod Assembly shall nominate two persons in the specified categories for possible election by the Churchwide Assembly to the Church Council.
- S9.11. The Synod Council shall elect or appoint representatives to the steering committee of its region.
- †S9.12. Background checks and screening shall be required and completed for persons nominated as synod officers prior to their election, if possible, or as soon as practical after their election. The specific procedures and timing of background checks and screening shall be determined by the Synod Council. Criteria for selection of synod officers shall include an evaluation of a nominee's demonstrated commitment to and experience in (i) promoting Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility within the synod and (ii) recruiting, training and mentoring members of Historically Underrepresented Groups for service in leadership positions in the synod.

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## Chapter 11.

### COMMITTEES

#### (names of other organizational units)

- †S11.01. There shall be an Executive Committee, a Consultation Committee, a Committee on Discipline, a Mutual Ministry Committee, an Audit Committee, and such other committees as this synod may from time to time determine. The duties and functions of such committees, or any other organizational units created by this synod, and the composition

and organizational structure of such units, shall be as set forth in this constitution or in the bylaws or continuing resolutions, and shall be subject to any applicable provisions or requirements of the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

†S11.02. The Consultation Committee of this synod shall consist of at least six persons and not more than 12 persons, of whom half shall be rostered ministers and half shall be laypersons, who shall each be elected by the Synod Assembly for a term of six years without consecutive 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.

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

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

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

†S11.04. The Mutual Ministry Committee shall be appointed by the Executive Committee of the Synod Council to provide support and counsel to the bishop. The Mutual Ministry shall assist the Synod Council and the bishop in (i) ensuring that congregations are encouraged to adopt and pursue the 2019 DEIA Recommendations and the Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards and (ii) providing all consenting congregations with the direction and resources they need to achieve and/or implement such recommendations and standards.

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

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

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## Chapter 14.

### ROSTERED MINISTERS

#### S14.10. Ministers of Word and Sacrament

†S14.11. The time and place of the ordination of those persons properly called to ministry in this synod shall be authorized by the bishop of this synod.

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

a. Every minister of Word and Sacrament shall:

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

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;
- 4) with the council, administer discipline;

- 5) endeavor to increase the support given by the congregation to the work of the churchwide organization and of this synod; ~~and~~
- 6) encourage adherence to covenantal relationship with this church as expressed in the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*; ~~and~~
- 7) encourage the congregation to adopt the 2019 DEIA Recommendations and the Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards, and to the extent the congregation agrees to adopt such recommendations and standards, structure and oversee the execution of strategies, programs and timetables to enable the congregation to implement, satisfy or exceed such recommendations and standards.

**S14.13.** The pastor (a) shall keep accurate records of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, communicants, members received, members dismissed, or members excluded from the congregation, (b) shall submit a summary of such statistics annually to this synod, and (c) shall become a member of the congregation upon receipt and acceptance of the letter of call. In a parish of multiple congregations, the pastor shall hold membership in one of the congregations.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Evangelical  
Lutheran Church  
in America

# MODEL CONSTITUTION FOR CONGREGATIONS OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA®

*Current as of November 2022*

## Chapter 4. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

**\*C4.01.** 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.

**\*C4.01A** The Church reflects the fullness of the character and values expressed and lived by Jesus Christ, and this congregation's practices and policies must therefore be determined by that character and those values. The Church identifies Jesus' character and values based on its relationship with Jesus Christ, and application of His Word, and not by the culture or the world. Any practices or policies of this congregation which conflict with Jesus' character and values must and shall be confronted, challenged and adjusted to conform to that character and those values. The character and values of Jesus include:

- a. Viewing the entire church as part of the body of Christ, not a mere building or another organization or an extension of any other institution in society.
- b. Valuing each person within that body equally as others, so that if one person feels or is viewed as weaker they must be made to feel indispensable.
- c. Sharing power and decision-making within the organization so that persons who would otherwise feel devalued or marginalized due to race, class, status, gender, sexual orientation, language or other barrier not wholly within their control are given power to control the development of their potential within the church.
- d. Sharing in the suffering of those who have been made to feel, or believe themselves to be, the least significant within or unwelcome by the church, including on account of any characteristic they possess but neither chose

nor control, so that if one suffers all others suffer with him or her as well, and all in the church endeavor daily to remedy that suffering.

- e. Loving, empowering and serving all of the marginalized.
- f. Opposing racism and racial supremacy in all its forms, and superseding geographic, ethnic and tribal barriers to share the love of Jesus Christ with those even radically different than ourselves, so that all congregants, wherever located and whatever race, experience inclusion in the loving body of Jesus Christ.
- g. Showing grace to those who have been accused of or are engaged in sin, while at the same time respecting the authority of Scripture and holiness, and never equating holiness with hatred.
- h. Avoiding hypocrisy, including the selective enforcement of applicable Scriptural moral mandates or prohibitions.
- i. Correcting systems which induce spiritual corruption in individuals or cause needless suffering, including on those who have historically been excluded from full participation in the Church.
- j. Respecting and debating diversity of opinions within the church, including on divisive social issues, without destroying the church.
- k. Promoting justice for those experiencing oppression within groups of larger society.
- l. Telling the truth and refusing to validate lies.

**\*C4.01B** Since this congregation must reflect the character and values of Jesus Christ, its policies and practices designed to promote DEIA must therefore be rooted in but also limited by that character and such values, including as expressed in Section 4.01A above. DEIA, as a policy, shall not be fundamentally determined by any other source of authority or influence, such as political affiliation or secular ideology, culture, academia or media. In the event of a conflict between this congregation's DEIA policy and any of these other sources of authority or influence, DEIA policy derived from the character and values of Jesus Christ must and shall prevail. This congregation acknowledges, however, that there may be overlap between the congregation's DEIA policy based on the character and values of Jesus Christ and similar policies espoused by well-intentioned non-religious sources, which other sources may inform, but not control, the congregation's DEIA policy.

**\*C4.02.** To participate in God's mission, this congregation as a part of the Church shall:

- a. Worship God in proclamation of the Word and administration of the sacraments and through lives of prayer, praise, thanksgiving, witness, and service.
- b. 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.
- c. 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.
- d. Serve in response to God's love to meet human needs, caring for the sick and the aged, advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations, and standing in solidarity with the poor and oppressed and committing itself to their needs.
- 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.
- g. Welcome and show love and compassion to all persons in the LGBTQIA+ community, who are seeking a relationship with Jesus Christ but may have historically experienced trauma, rejection or even hatred from the church or this congregation. This congregation will show equal value, respect, love and compassion to all those members of the LGBTQIA+ community whose faith and interpretation of God's Word has led them to avoid acting on sexual attractions proscribed by Scripture, as to those who love The Lord and neither perceive nor experience any inconsistency between their love of Jesus and their sexuality. Such equal respect, love and compassion is not conditioned on whether this congregation has taken a particular position on competing proposals at any time under consideration by the church related to sexual ethics or broader issues of concern to the LGBTQIA+ community.
- h. Actively promote Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility in this congregation, including by adopting and diligently implementing the 2019 DEIA Recommendations and striving to exceed the Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards.

For purposes hereof, this Constitution hereby incorporates by reference the definitions of the following terms as set forth in the Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility  
Historically Underrepresented Groups  
2019 DEIA Recommendations



Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards.

i. Actively mentor all persons who have been historically underrepresented in positions of leadership within the congregation (including members of Historically Underrepresented Groups) so that the clergy and lay leadership in this congregation increasingly reflect materially greater diversity than has historically existed.

- \*C4.03. To fulfill these purposes, this congregation shall:
- a. Provide services of worship at which the Word of God is preached and the sacraments are administered.
  - b. Provide pastoral care and assist all members to participate in this ministry.
  - c. Challenge, equip, and support all members in carrying out their calling in their daily lives and in their congregation.
  - d. Teach the Word of God.
  - e. Witness to the reconciling Word of God in Christ, reaching out to all people.
  - f. Respond to human need, work for justice and peace, care for the sick and the suffering, and participate responsibly in society.
  - g. Motivate its members to provide financial support for this congregation's ministry and the ministry of the other expressions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
  - h. Foster and participate in interdependent relationships with other congregations, the synod, and the churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
  - i. Foster and participate in ecumenical relationships consistent with churchwide policy.
  - j. Diligently implement the 2019 DEIA Recommendations (as applicable to congregations) and achieve or exceed the Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards, including by creating and pursuing strategies and programs to accomplish the same.
- \*C4.04. This congregation shall develop an organizational structure to be described in the bylaws. The Congregation Council shall prepare descriptions of the responsibilities of each committee, task force, or other organizational group and shall review their actions. [Such descriptions shall be contained in continuing resolutions in the section on the Congregation Committees.]
- \*C4.05. This congregation shall adopt and periodically review a mission statement which will provide specific direction for its programs.
- \*C4.06. 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.

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## Chapter 9.

### ROSTERED MINISTER

- \*C9.01. Authority to call a pastor shall be in this congregation by at least a two-thirds vote of voting members present and voting at a meeting legally called for that purpose. Before a call is issued, the officers, or a committee elected by [this congregation][the Congregation Council] to recommend the call, shall seek the advice and help of the bishop of the synod.
- \*C9.02. Only a member of the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or a candidate for the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament who has been recommended for this congregation by the synod bishop may be called as a pastor of this congregation.
- \*C9.03. Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,
- a. Every minister of Word and Sacrament shall:
    - 1) preach the Word;
    - 2) administer the sacraments;
    - 3) conduct public worship;
    - 4) provide pastoral care;
    - 5) seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel;
    - 6) impart knowledge of this church and its wider ministry through available channels of effective communication;
    - 7) witness to the Kingdom of God in the community, in the nation, and abroad; ~~and~~
    - 8) speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, and embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations and all other members of Historically Underrepresented Groups; and

9) lead the congregation in devising strategies and structuring programs, and obtaining any necessary funding, to implement the 2019 DEIA Recommendations and satisfy or exceed the Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards (in each case as applicable to congregations).

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

\*C9.04. The specific duties of the pastor, compensation, and other matters pertaining to the service of the pastor shall be included in a letter of call, which shall be attested by the bishop of the synod.

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\*C9.12. The pastor of this congregation:

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

\*C9.13. The pastor(s) shall submit a report of ministry to the bishop of the synod at least 90 days prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly. Such report shall include an explanation of (i) whether the congregation has elected to adopt, and implement or satisfy, the 2019 DEIA Recommendations or the Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards or both, (ii) if it has adopted such recommendations and/or standards, the progress achieved to date in implementing or satisfying such recommendations and standards, and (iii) if it has not elected to adopt such recommendations and standards, why that is the case and whether there are other means the congregation has considered or would consider to achieve greater diversity within the membership and lay leadership of the congregation.

\*C9.14. The records of this congregation shall be maintained by the pastor and shall remain the property of this congregation. The secretary of this congregation shall attest in writing to the bishop of this synod that such records have been placed in the secretary's hands in good order by a departing pastor before the installation of that pastor in another call or approval of a request for change in roster status.

C9.15. Under special circumstances, subject to the approval of the synod bishop and the concurrence of this congregation, a minister of Word and Sacrament of a church body with which the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America officially has established a relationship of full communion may serve temporarily as pastor of this congregation under a contract between this congregation and the pastor in a form proposed by the synod bishop and approved by this congregation.

\*C9.21. Authority to call a deacon shall be in this congregation by at least a two-thirds vote of voting members present and voting at a meeting legally called for that purpose. Before a call is issued, the officers, or a committee elected by [this congregation][the Congregation Council] to recommend the call, shall seek the advice and help of the bishop of the synod.

\*C9.22. Only a member of the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or a candidate for the roster of Ministers of Word and Service who has been recommended for this congregation by the synod bishop may be called as a deacon of this congregation.

\*C9.23. Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, every minister of Word and Service shall:

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

- i. Identify and encourage qualified persons to prepare for ministry of the gospel.
- \*C9.24. The specific duties of the deacon, compensation, and other matters pertaining to the service of the deacon shall be included in a letter of call, which shall be attested by the bishop of the synod.

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**Chapter 12.**  
**CONGREGATION COUNCIL**

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- C12.04.** The Congregation Council shall have general oversight of the life and activities of this congregation, and in particular its worship life, to the end that everything be done in accordance with the Word of God and the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The duties of the Congregation Council shall include the following:
- a. To lead this congregation in stating its mission, to do long-range planning, to set goals and priorities, and to evaluate its activities in light of its mission and goals.
  - b. To seek to involve all members of this congregation in worship, learning, witness, service, and support.
  - c. To oversee and provide for the administration of this congregation to enable it to fulfill its functions and perform its mission.
  - d. To maintain supportive relationships with the rostered minister(s) and staff and help them annually to evaluate the fulfillment of their calling or employment.
  - e. To be examples individually and corporately of the style of life and ministry expected of all baptized persons.
  - f. To promote a congregational climate of peace and goodwill and, as differences and conflicts arise, to endeavor to foster mutual understanding.
  - g. To arrange for pastoral service during the sickness or absence of the pastor.
  - h. To emphasize support of the synod and churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as well as cooperation with other congregations, both Lutheran and non-Lutheran, subject to established policies of the synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
  - i. To recommend and encourage the use of program resources produced or approved by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
  - j. To seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel.
  - k. Oversee the creation, execution and administration of strategies and programs to implement or satisfy the 2019 DEIA Recommendations and Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards.
- C12.05.** The Congregation Council shall be responsible for the financial and property matters of this congregation.
- a. The Congregation Council shall be the board of [trustees] [directors] of this congregation and, as such, shall be responsible for maintaining and protecting its property and managing its business and fiscal affairs. It shall have the powers and be subject to the obligations that pertain to such boards under the laws of the State of \_\_\_\_\_, except as otherwise provided herein.
  - b. The Congregation Council shall not have the authority to buy, sell, or encumber real property unless specifically authorized to do so by a meeting of this congregation.
  - c. The Congregation Council may enter into contracts of up to \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for items not included in the budget.
  - d. The Congregation Council shall prepare an annual budget for adoption by this congregation, shall supervise the expenditure of funds in accordance therewith following its adoption, and may incur obligations of more than \$ \_\_\_\_\_ in excess of the anticipated receipts only after approval by a Congregation Meeting. The budget shall include this congregation's full indicated share in support of the wider ministry being carried on in collaboration with the synod and churchwide organization.
  - e. The Congregation Council shall ascertain that the financial affairs of this congregation are being conducted efficiently, giving particular attention to the prompt payment of all obligations and to the regular forwarding of mission support monies to the synod.
  - f. The Congregation Council shall be responsible for this congregation's investments and its total insurance program.
  - g. The Congregation Council shall create and implement strategies, goals and timetables to ensure that (i) at least 10% of the overall goods and services purchased by the congregation (as a congregation not as individual members) are from persons who are, or entities majority owned or controlled by, Persons of Color and/or Non-Primary English Speaking persons, and (ii) an additional 10% of such goods and services are purchased from persons from Historically Underrepresented Groups other than Persons of Color or Non-Primary English Speaking persons, in each case to the extent such providers of such goods and services are available (a) online or (b) physically within a reasonable vicinity from the congregation.

- C12.06.** The Congregation Council shall see that the provisions of this constitution[,] [and] its bylaws[,] [and the continuing resolutions] are carried out.
- C12.07.** The Congregation Council shall provide for an annual review of the membership roster.
- C12.08.** The Congregation Council shall be responsible for the employment and supervision of the staff of this congregation. Nothing in this provision shall be deemed to affect this congregation's responsibility for the call, terms of call, or termination of call of any employees who are on a roster of this church.
- C12.09.** The Congregation Council shall submit a comprehensive report to this congregation at the annual meeting.
- C12.11.** The Congregation Council shall normally meet once a month. Special meetings may be called by the pastor or the president<sup>1</sup>, and shall be called by the president at the request of at least one-half of its members. Notice of each special meeting shall be given to all who are entitled to be present.
- C12.12.** A quorum for the transaction of business shall consist of a majority of the members of the Congregation Council, including the [senior] pastor or interim pastor, except when the [senior] pastor or interim pastor requests or consents to be absent and has given prior approval to the agenda for a particular regular or special meeting, which shall be the only business considered at that meeting. Chronic or repeated absence of the [senior] pastor or interim pastor who has refused approval of the agenda of a subsequent regular or special meeting shall not preclude action by the Congregation Council, following consultation with the synod bishop.
- C12.13.** The Congregation Council and its committees may hold meetings by remote communication, including electronically and by telephone conference, as long as there is an opportunity for simultaneous aural communication or its equivalent. To the extent permitted by state law, notice of all meetings may be provided electronically.

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