

Waters of Promise
Waters of Life

Voting Member Materials

Synod Assembly

June 5-7, 2026

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In an effort to care for creation, no paper voting member materials will be available at assembly. Please bring your own paper copies (if desired) or a tablet/smart phone to access the documents electronically during the assembly. All documents are posted separately at www.eandsynod.org, so you can print whatever you feel is necessary. One printed copy of all voting member materials will be available for review at the Business Table in the Great Hall. You will receive a printed agenda at check-in.





2026 Synod Assembly Agenda

FRIDAY, JUNE 5

2:00 - 4:15 p.m. | **Check-In Open**

4:30 p.m. | **Plenary 1**
 Land Acknowledgement
 Opening of Assembly
 Adopt Agenda and Rules of Procedure
 Introduction to the Bishop Election Process
 Bishop Election – Ballot #1

5:30 p.m. | **Supper**

6:30 p.m. | **Opening Worship with Holy Communion**

7:45 p.m. | **Plenary 2**
 Bishop Election – Results from Ballot #1

SATURDAY, JUNE 6

7:30 a.m. | **Check-In Open**

8:00 a.m. | **Coffee Social**

8:30 a.m. | **Plenary 3**
 Bishop Election – Ballot #2

9:00 a.m. | **Bible Study**

9:45 a.m. | **Plenary 4**
 Acknowledgements
 Report of the Nominating Committee
 Report of the Secretary
 Report of the Treasurer
 Presentation of Proposed Mission Plan
 Bishop Election – Results from Ballot #2
 State of the ELCA

If Election on Ballot #1

Cancelled | **Plenary 3**

9:00 a.m. | **Bible Study**

9:45 a.m. | **Plenary 4**
 Remains the same with removal of Results from Ballot #2

11:00 a.m. | **Break**

SATURDAY, JUNE 6 CONT.

11:15 a.m. | **Conference Elections**

12:00 p.m. | **Lunch**

1:00 p.m. | **Plenary 5**
 Nominee Speeches
 Bishop Election – Ballot #3
 Anniversary Celebrations
 Resolutions
 Bishop Election – Results from Ballot #3

If Election on Ballot #1 or #2

1 p.m. | **Plenary 5**
 Anniversary Celebrations
 Disaster Capacity Case Study
 Resolutions
 2:30 p.m. | **Break**

2:45 p.m. | **Break**

3:00 p.m. | **Workshops (45 minutes)**

4:00 p.m. | **Plenary 6**
 Elections (non-Bishop)
 Q&A Instructions

If Election on Ballots #1-3

4 p.m. | **Plenary 6**
 Elections (non-Bishop)
 Resolutions
 State of the Synod

4:30 p.m. | **Bishop Election - Nominee Q&A**

Supper on Your Own

8:00 p.m. | **Evening Prayer**

If Election on Ballots #1-3

9:15 a.m. | **Plenary 7**
 Report of the VP
 Adoption of the Mission Plan
 Election Results

SUNDAY, JUNE 7

8:00 a.m. | **Coffee Social**

8:30 a.m. | **Bible Study**

9:15 a.m. | **Plenary 7**
 Bishop Election – Ballot #4
 Report of the Vice President
 Adoption of the Mission Plan
 Election Results
 Bishop Election – Results of Ballot #4
 Bishop Election – Ballot #5
 Resolutions
 Bishop Election – Results of Ballot #5

10:00 a.m. | **Special Recognitions**

10:30 a.m. | **Workshops**

11:30 a.m. | **Sending Worship**

12:15 p.m. | **Lunch**

10:45 a.m. | **Special Recognitions**

11:15 a.m. | **Break**

11:30 a.m. | **Sending Worship**

12:15 p.m. | **Lunch**
 Boxed lunch can be taken to go





1. The agenda and the rules of procedure will be adopted at the first session of the assembly. Once adopted, they may only be changed by a two-thirds vote of the assembly.
2. Official Voting Members are to be seated at tables on the plenary floor. Persons granted voice, but not vote [S7.23.] may also be seated on the floor. Visitors are welcome to sit on the floor but will be designated with a different name tag.
3. One-third of the members of the Synod Assembly shall constitute a quorum [S7.14.].
4. If the lack of a quorum prevents action on any item of business, the disposition of which is essential for the ongoing work of the synod, that matter shall be referred to the Synod Council for action, and the action of the Synod Council shall be binding on the synod.
5. Only Voting Members may make a motion using the following steps on how to make a motion:
 - a) The motion, amendment or referral must be in writing (forms available at the business table). Keep one copy, send one to the assembly chairperson.
 - b) When recognized by the chair, give your name, congregation, and city.
 - c) State your motion, "I move that".
 - d) As a general rule, every motion shall be seconded.
 - e) The chairperson will restate the motion as made and seconded before it is debated.
6. Unless otherwise determined by a two-thirds vote of the assembly, all speeches in general discussion shall be limited to two minutes, and no person shall speak more than twice on the same subject.
7. Rostered ministers serving under contract who are currently rostered in a different synod shall have voice, but not vote, at this assembly.
8. Only resolutions received at least 30 days prior to the assembly and distributed two weeks prior to the assembly shall come before the synod assembly with the exception of resolutions dealing with events or issues originating within 45 days prior to and including the assembly. These resolutions will be reviewed by the Resolutions Committee, if received prior to the assembly, or by the Committee on Reference and Counsel, if submitted at the assembly, to ascertain whether it is germane and should be brought forward to the assembly.
9. When reporting to the synod assembly the Committee on Reference and Counsel may move:
 - a) to adopt the resolution as submitted by *(name)*.
 - b) to adopt the resolution, proposed by *(name)* as amended by the Committee on Reference and Counsel.
 - c) to refer the resolution, submitted by *(name)* to the Synod Council for *(specify expectation)*.
 - d) to adopt the substitute resolution for the resolution submitted by *(name)*.
 - e) to decline the resolution as proposed by *(name)*.

In reviewing proposed memorials, resolutions, and main motions, the Reference and Counsel Committee may edit, prepare an alternative memorial, resolution, or motion,



or consolidate into a single proposed action multiple memorials, resolutions, or main motions on the same or similar subjects. Whenever the Reference and Counsel Committee recommends an edited or alternative memorial, resolution, or motion, the report to the assembly shall contain the text of the original motion.

10. No resolution shall be accepted by the Committee on Reference and Counsel after **May 5, 2026** without two-thirds vote of approval by the assembly.
11. For all elections other than the election for bishop, the following provisions apply:
 - a) The Nominating Committee shall present a slate of candidates for each vacancy to be filled by election [S9.03.02, 9.05, 9.06, 9.07].
 - b) Any voting member may submit additional nominations to open positions. These should be submitted in writing to the Business Table by **12:00pm on Saturday, June 6, 2026**.
 - c) All elections shall be by ballot. In all elections except for the bishop, a majority vote is required for election. If no majority is achieved on the first ballot, the two persons receiving the highest number of legal votes shall be entered on the next ballot [S9.08].
 - e) The result of each ballot in every election shall be announced in detail to the assembly.
11. The following process and procedures shall be followed for the bishop election:
 - a) The representative of the churchwide organization shall preside over the assembly whenever the assembly is in session and considering business related to the election of the synod bishop, or when the assembly is casting ballots in this election.
 - b) The bishop shall be elected by the Synod Assembly. 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. (S9.04)
 - c) On the first ballot, the names of the seven ministers, plus any tie for the seventh place, that were identified by the Nominating Committee, shall be listed. In addition, any voting member of the Synod Assembly may submit the name of any minister of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as a nominee. If there is no election on the first ballot, biographical information on the additional nominees shall be obtained and distributed to voting members prior to the casting of the second ballot, except for those who have asked following the first ballot that their names not appear on the second ballot. (S9.04.i)



- d) All those who receive at least one vote on the first ballot when there is no election are eligible to move forward to the second ballot. Ministers of Word and Sacrament who are nominated as a write in on the first ballot that do not wish to remain in the election will need to withdraw no later than **9:00pm on Friday, June 5th**. You can withdraw by submitting a Withdrawal Form found at the Business Table or by sending an email to eandsynodelections@gmail.com. Biographical Forms and Photos for those remaining in the election should be submitted by 6:30am on Saturday, June 6th by email to eandsynodelections@gmail.com.
- e) Only after the first ballot may a nominee withdraw their name from further consideration.
- f) Prior to the third ballot for bishop, the seven persons (plus ties) who received the greatest number of votes on the second ballot will be invited to address the assembly, with speaking limited to five minutes each.
- g) Prior to the fourth ballot for bishop, the three persons (plus ties) who received the greatest number of votes on the third ballot will be invited to participate in a question-and-answer period.
12. For the purpose of credentialing, check-in will close 15 minutes prior to any plenary session with a ballot for the bishop election.
13. The latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order shall govern parliamentary procedure of this Synod Assembly (S7.32), except as otherwise provided in the constitution or bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or of the Eastern North Dakota Synod.



NOMINEES FOR EASTERN NORTH DAKOTA SYNOD COUNCIL (two-year term):

S10.07.01 b. One Rostered Minister and one lay person from each conference nominated at the Conference Assembly and elected by the Synod Assembly. The terms of conference representatives shall be two years (eligible for two consecutive re-elections).

**Nominees are brought forward from the Conference Elections*

Prairie Rose Conference:

Vote for one (1) lay person

Grand Forks Conference:

Vote for one (1) rostered minister

Spirit Lake Conference:

Vote for one (1) rostered minister

Jamestown Conference:

Vote for one (1) lay person

Fargo Conference:

Vote for one (1) rostered minister

Wahpeton Conference:

Vote for one (1) rostered minister & one (1) layperson

Grafton Conference:

Vote for one (1) lay person

NOMINEES FOR YOUTH REPRESENTATIVE TO SYNOD COUNCIL (one-year term):

S10.07.01.c Each youth member of the Synod Council shall be a voting member, elected by the Synod Assembly for a one-year term and eligible for two consecutive re-elections.

**Nominee is brought forward by the Synod Nominating Committee*

Vote for one (1) layperson

_____ Audrey Johnson*

NOMINEES FOR YOUNG ADULT REPRESENTATIVE TO SYNOD COUNCIL (two-year term):

S10.07.01.d Each young adult member of the Synod Council shall be a voting member, elected by the Synod Assembly for a two-year term and eligible for two consecutive re-elections.

**Nominee is brought forward by the Synod Nominating Committee*

Vote for one (1) layperson

_____ Katlyn Balstad*

NOMINEE FOR MULTICULTURAL REPRESENTATIVE TO SYNOD COUNCIL (two-year term):

S10.07.01.e Two lay representatives who are persons of color and/or whose primary language is other than English. These persons are elected by the Synod Assembly for a two-year term, eligible for two consecutive re-elections.

**Nominee is brought forward by the Synod Nominating Committee*

Vote for one (1) layperson



NOMINEES FOR EASTERN NORTH DAKOTA COMMITTEE ON DISCIPLINE (six-year term):

+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.

**Nominees are brought forward by the Synod Nominating Committee*

Vote for one (1) layperson

____ Tracy Good*

Vote for one (1) rostered minister

____ Rev. JoAnne Moeller*

An Overview of the Bishop Election Process to Date

The bishop election process is both an election and a call, governed by our synod's constitution and guided by prayerful discernment. In February, all congregations of the synod had an opportunity to submit nominations. Eighteen congregations submitted nominations for bishop of the Eastern North Dakota Synod. Of the eight persons nominated, three agreed to have their names go forward to Conference Assemblies (Rev. Amy Eisenmann, Rev. Tessa Moon Leiseth, and Rev. Kristi Weber). Brief biographies of the three nominees were distributed in advance of the Conference Assemblies. At the Conference Assemblies, voting members were able to vote for one of the nominees or write-in a nominee. There were ten persons nominated and five agreed to have their name go forward to the Synod Assembly (Rev. Joel Baranko, Rev. Amy Eisenmann, Rev. Carter Hill, Rev. Tessa Moon Leiseth, and Rev. Kristi Weber). These five nominees participated in two open forums, April 23rd (zoom and recorded) and April 30th (in-person). On May 14, Rev. Joel Baranko withdrew from the process. There are currently four nominees for bishop.

Bishop Election Process at Synod Assembly

First Ballot for Bishop

On the first ballot for bishop, the four nominees will be listed, along with a space for a write-in nomination. All those who are nominated will have the opportunity to withdraw their name.

Three-fourths of the valid votes cast are needed for election.

Second Ballot for Bishop

Prior to the second ballot for bishop, nominee biographies will be made available. The second ballot for bishop will include all nominees who did not withdraw their name.

Three-fourths of the valid votes cast are needed for election.

Third Ballot for Bishop

The top seven nominees will be given the opportunity to speak to the assembly for five minutes prior to the third ballot for bishop.

Two-Thirds of the valid votes cast are needed for election.

Fourth Ballot for Bishop

Prior to the fourth ballot, a question and answer session will take place for the top three nominees.

Sixty percent of the valid votes cast are needed for election.

Fifth Ballot for Bishop

The top two nominees will be on the fifth ballot for bishop.

Majority of the valid votes cast are needed for election.



Eastern North Dakota Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Bishop Election Process
Biographical Forms for Nominees

Rev. Amy Eisenmann

1. Current Position
 - Pastor at Bethel Lutheran Church, Wahpeton
2. Congregation Membership
 - Bethel Lutheran Church, Wahpeton
3. Date and Year of Ordination
 - September 6, 2008
4. Previous Positions
 - Lead Pastor at Bethlehem Lutheran, Cedar Falls, IA (Jan 2000-Nov 2004)
 - Pastor at St. Mark's Lutheran, Palo, MN (Sept 2008-Feb 2011)
 - Associate Pastor at Holy Cross Lutheran, Sioux Falls, IA (March 2011-Jan 2013)
 - Pastor at St. Matthew's Lutheran, Thompson, ND (Jan 2013-Jan 2020)
5. Education and Earned Degrees (with institutions and years, most recent first)
 - Master of Divinity, Luther Seminary (2008)
 - Master of Arts-Christian Education, Luther Seminary (2003)
 - Bachelor of Arts-Youth and Family Ministry, Midland Lutheran College (2000)
6. List up to five (5) current or past synod or churchwide activities that would inform your service as bishop of this synod.
 - Served as Dean of Laurentian Conference in NEMN Synod.
 - Served as Dean of Grand Forks Conference in EAND Synod.
 - Served on 2 Synod Ministry Review Teams in Eastern ND.
 - Served on EAND Synod Assembly Planning Team.
 - Served on First Call Committee in NEIA Synod.
7. List up to five (5) current or past community-related activities that would inform your service as bishop of this synod.
 - Serving as church liaison to Wilkin County Mental Health Board.
 - Working on the steering committee to bring Love INC to the Twin Towns (Breckenridge and Wahpeton).
 - Served on the Cedar Valley Interfaith Council, working together so that all denominations and faiths might have voice at the table.
 - Served on EWALU Bible Camp Board in Strawberry Point, Iowa.
 - Grew up as a double pastors' kid and have served calls in 4 different synods.

8. What gifts would you bring to the office of bishop of this synod? (1,000 characters maximum)

Administration-I have a desire to streamline processes & procedures for the ease of all. Working smarter, not harder is essential. Recognizing some churches have limited resources and others are blessed abundantly, I'd help churches work together in new ways across current boundaries and borders. Encouragement- I love to take time to truly hear and see people and let them know that their hard work is seen and appreciated. Whether we are talking about pastors, SAMS, lay leaders, youth, or retired clergy and families, all parts of our synod need a place to feel seen, heard, and cared for. I bring a passion and energy for helping our leaders find renewal and our lay people find empowerment. Creativity-we live in a world that is changing fast, so we need to think outside the box and find ways to use the gifts we have differently. I bring with me a love of seeing God work in new ways while still appreciating tradition and history.

9. What do you see as the principal challenge to this synod in the next six (6) years, and how would you address it? (1,000 characters maximum)

I firmly believe that one of our principal challenges is the ever-changing world we live in. We constantly are finding ourselves having to pivot in ministry and think differently. As communities change quickly, we must adapt to stay relevant. We need to prioritize relationships and to learn and live together in a respectful environment. We need to focus on our unity and how we might work together for the good of all. As bishop of Eastern North Dakota, I would work to strengthen relationships both within churches in our synod and with the wider community. We need to truly listen to what our neighbors are doing well, and instead of competing, work together for the good of our community. I would prioritize caring for our rostered leaders, SAMS, and lay leaders alike. If we care for them, they can care better for those they are called to serve. Synod staff and I would focus on celebrating gifts of all people within our synod, and encouraging ways to use those gifts for the good of all.

10. Describe your leadership style. (1,000 characters maximum)

I tend to be a relaxed, conversational leader and preacher. I believe that we can learn from each other, and that we are stronger together than we are as individuals. I am organized, enjoy the planning process, and like to be involved in things from the ground up. I tend to listen first and then ask questions, as a way of hearing others' stories. I believe our stories and experiences make us who we are, and if we listen to each other's stories, we can better understand where others are coming from. I enjoy helping involve others in the process of ministry. Each person has gifts, and helping them discover, develop, and utilize their gifts is an honor as a leader in the church. I love that the more folks we have involved, the more gifts that can be shown, and the more gifts that can be shown, the more complete picture of God and his love we are able to see!



Eastern North Dakota Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Bishop Election Process
Biographical Forms for Nominees

Rev. Carter Hill

1. Current Position
 - Lead Pastor, Grafton Lutheran Church - Grafton, ND
2. Congregation Membership
 - Grafton Lutheran Church - Grafton ND
3. Date and Year of Ordination
 - May 21, 2017
4. Previous Positions
 - Lead Pastor of Administration and Parish Life - Prairie Lutheran Parish (American Lutheran, Stanley ND; Bethlehem Lutheran, Ross; Faith Lutheran, Palermo; Knife River Lutheran, rural Stanley), October 2016 - February 2021
 - Interim Leader - English Lutheran Church, Hazen ND, May 2016 - September 2016
5. Education and Earned Degrees (with institutions and years, most recent first)
 - Doctor of Ministry in Missional Leadership, Palmer Theological Seminary, St. Davids, Pennsylvania, (in progress)
 - Master of Divinity, Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, Iowa, 2016
 - Bachelor of Arts in English Education, University of North Dakota, 2012
6. List up to five (5) current or past synod or churchwide activities that would inform your service as bishop of this synod.
 - Lutheran Youth Board President for the Western North Dakota Synod, 2004 – 2009
 - Dean, Western Prairie Conference, Western North Dakota Synod, 2018–2021
 - Event Planner, Western North Dakota Synod Rostered Leaders Conference, 2019
 - Camp of the Cross, Garrison, ND – _Capitol Campaign Committee, 2017-2019
7. List up to five (5) current or past community-related activities that would inform your service as bishop of this synod.
 - Grafton Area Chamber of Commerce Board - Grafton, North Dakota. 2024 – Present
 - Theater Director, Park River Area Schools, 2022 – Present
 - Vice President, Grafton Christian Ministerial Association, 2021- Present
 - Oversight of community assistance funds for neighbors in need through the ministerial association, and the operating of a local food pantry, and secondhand store that supports community members in need.

8. What gifts would you bring to the office of bishop of this synod? (1,000 characters maximum)

I would bring vision, creativity, strong leadership, and the ability to connect with people. In both of my calls, I have helped congregations clarify their mission and move toward a more hopeful and life-giving future. In my current call, there was not a clear path driving the congregation forward and little to unite the people around a shared sense of purpose. By helping the congregation name its strengths and embrace a common vision, we have grown into a healthier, more mission-focused community. I believe I would bring encouragement and support to pastors in a rapidly changing church environment, along with a deep commitment to being present with and attentive to the congregations and leaders of this synod.

9. What do you see as the principal challenge to this synod in the next six (6) years, and how would you address it? (1,000 characters maximum)

I believe the principal challenge facing this synod in the next six years is whether we are willing to respond faithfully to the church as it is now rather than continue operating from models built for another time. We are a largely rural synod serving many congregations with limited resources and not enough pastors, yet we often remain tied to centralized structures that can feel distant from ministry on the ground. Some congregations may never again have a full-time called pastor, and the synod must be honest enough to face that reality while still helping those communities remain vital, connected, and faithful. I believe we need to think radically differently about how the synod is staffed and how support is offered. My hope would be for this synod to become a model for how other synods can thrive in a deeply rural setting: relational, flexible, creative, and close to the people and congregations it serves.

10. Describe your leadership style. (1,000 characters maximum)

My leadership style is grounded in trust that God is always at work, even in seasons of uncertainty and change. I believe the Holy Spirit is still leading, renewing, and calling the church forward. Change can be fearful, but it is also what keeps us alive. Because of that, I try to lead with both courage and hope. I am deeply relational and connect easily with people, but I also lead with vision, creativity, and strong administration. I work to help congregations name their strengths, clarify their mission, and move toward a faithful future together. I do not believe leadership is about preserving old systems simply because they are familiar. I believe it is about prayerful discernment, honest reflection, and trusting God enough to follow where God is leading next. I strive to lead in a way that is pastoral, honest, direct, collaborative, and life-giving.



Eastern North Dakota Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Bishop Election Process
Biographical Forms for Nominees

Rev. Tessa Moon Leiseth

1. Current Position
 - Bishop, Eastern North Dakota Synod
2. Congregation Membership
 - St Mark's Lutheran Church, Fargo
3. Date and Year of Ordination
 - June 21, 1998
4. Previous Positions
 - Interim Senior Pastor, Horace Lutheran, Horace ND (2019-2020)
 - Interim Senior Pastor, Christ the King Lutheran Church, Moorhead MN (2018-2019)
 - Country Coordinator - ELCA Young Adults in Global Mission / Missionary, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa (2012-2017)
 - Campus Pastor, Concordia College, Moorhead, MN (2008-2012)
 - Associate Pastor, Our Saviour's Lutheran Church, East Bethel, MN (2000-2006)
 - Youth and Family Pastor, Abiding Savior Lutheran Church, Mounds View, MN (1998-2000)
 - Summer Chaplain, Red Willow Bible Camp, Binford, ND (1996)
5. Education and Earned Degrees (with institutions and years, most recent first)
 - Luther Seminary, M.Div., 1998
 - Concordia College, B.A., Art History, 1992
6. List up to five (5) current or past synod or churchwide activities that would inform your service as bishop of this synod.
 - Bishop / Member of EaND Synod Council
 - Member of the ELCA Conference of Bishops
 - Chair of the Conference of Bishops Liaison Committee to the ELCA Service & Justice Unit
 - ELCA Global Mission
 - Coaching Network, EaND Synod
7. List up to five (5) current or past community-related activities that would inform your service as bishop of this synod.
 - Board of Regents, Oak Grove Lutheran School
 - Board of Regents, Concordia College
 - Community book club member
 - Parent theatre volunteer

– Young adult mentor

8. What gifts would you bring to the office of bishop of this synod? (1,000 characters maximum)

I am a clear proclaimer of the Gospel. I serve with a pastor's heart and approach ministry seeing and expecting the good in others. I am described as compassionate, faithful and humble. I am looked to for my non-anxious and positive presence. I bring gifts of wisdom, experience, and leadership to the office of bishop. I am steeped in congregational, synod, churchwide, and global mission experiences. These shape my vision for our church. I am both strategic and practical. I am always rooted in what has been and looking to what is possible. I see the big picture and look to the future while recognizing what needs to be accomplished today. I see patterns, connections, and capacities and can lead a group to consider ways forward within complexities of challenges and competing priorities. I am also comfortable when answers are not known or clear. I am a child of this Synod. I love Eastern North Dakota, its congregations, and especially its people. I have a heart for service and the church.

9. What do you see as the principal challenge to this synod in the next six (6) years, and how would you address it? (1,000 characters maximum)

A principal challenge will be the ongoing complex need for growing capacity and adaptation in the midst of decreasing and changing resources. Examples include the Good News of Jesus competing for attention in an arena filled with distraction, skepticism, isolation, and fear; a decline in the availability of rostered ministers, especially for rural calls; and ongoing grief over the loss of the church of the past.

And yet, the Holy Spirit continues to work through people, our gifts, and our lives. Being church, and being church together, in this context will require continued agility and adaptation for congregations and individuals (both lay and clergy) as well as significant trust, resourcing and imagination. As bishop, I would continue to support this synod with adaptive change, new resources, creative thinking, collaborative partnerships, strong accompaniment and encouragement, an unwavering commitment to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and faith in the work of the Holy Spirit among us.

10. Describe your leadership style. (1,000 characters maximum)

My natural leadership style is contextual and adaptive. I show up fully, listen actively and deeply, and seek to first understand. I trust local wisdom and believe God is already at work in the situation. I seek common ground and utilization of people's gifts. I ask curious questions so others can articulate their perspectives, ideas, and hopes. I pay attention to those who do not have voice or opportunity. I seek input for idea generation and development, as well as in decision-making.

Knowing there isn't always time for collaboration, I am willing and able to set direction, make decisions, and move plans forward. I am able to make hard decisions and follow through. I make sure progress is made while remaining adaptive. I try new things and pivot as needed, believing there is always more to learn from each other and from a situation. I accompany and support people and organizations in expanding their vision and capacity, while also nurturing them spiritually.



Eastern North Dakota Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Bishop Election Process
Biographical Forms for Nominees

Rev. Kristina Weber

1. Current Position
 - Senior Pastor, Trinity Lutheran Church (2013 - present)
2. Congregation Membership
 - Trinity Lutheran Church, Jamestown, ND
3. Date and Year of Ordination
 - October 26, 1997
4. Previous Positions
 - Associate Pastor, St. Luke's Luth., Park Ridge, IL (2006-2013)
 - Interim Pastor, Lutheran Church of the Reformation and St. James Lutheran (Minneapolis Area Synod) (2004-2005)
 - Associate Pastor, Family of Christ Lutheran, Chanhassen, MN (2001-2004)
 - Pastor, Toivola-Meadowlands Lutheran Parish, (Hope, Toivola and First, Meadowlands, MN) (Northeastern MN Synod) (1997-2001)
5. Education and Earned Degrees (with institutions and years, most recent first)
 - MBA, (Master of Business Administration) University of Jamestown (2025)
 - Certificate (Nonprofit Management) Axelson Center at North Park University (non-degree, 2008-2010)
 - MDiv, Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary (1997)
 - BA, St. Olaf College (1992) (Major: Religion)
6. List up to five (5) current or past synod or churchwide activities that would inform your service as bishop of this synod.
 - Eastern North Dakota Synod Council Executive Team, Secretary (2016-2020), Interim Secretary (2024-2025)
 - EAND Synod Committees: Generosity 2026, Consultation 2022 to present, Constitution 2020, Compensation Guidelines 2018, Campus Ministry 2018
 - Lutheran Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Representatives Network, (Churchwide Board Treasurer, 2013-2017)
 - Synod Assembly Planning Committees (2003, 2007, 2008)
 - Facilitator: Healthy Congregations (2004, renewed credentials 2019) and Bridge Builders - Conflict Resolution Teams (2002-2005)
7. List up to five (5) current or past community-related activities that would inform your service as bishop of this synod.
 - Christians in Action Ministry founding member NDChristiansAct.org (2021-present)

- Community Band member, 2025 and 2026
- Volunteer at and fan of Class B basketball tournaments, 2014-present
- Sunday Night Suppers - meal ministry, 2012-2013
- Sunshine Kiddie Care - founding board member, nonprofit child care center, Meadowlands, MN, (population 100) 1999-2001

8. What gifts would you bring to the office of bishop of this synod? (1,000 characters maximum)

- Strategic Thinking - I look for the big picture and identify the steps needed to get from where we are to where we need to be.
- Relationships - I thrive when connecting people with one another. Together we can inspire faith in Jesus Christ and support our neighbors.
- Curiosity and love of learning - My MBA emphasis was finance and social media marketing. I talk with people who connect with congregations through online experiences. <https://www.st-johnslutheran.org/#/sabbatical-essays/>
- Grounded in Faith - I trust the Holy Spirit to guide each step of the journey.

9. What do you see as the principal challenge to this synod in the next six (6) years, and how would you address it? (1,000 characters maximum)

The next six years will look nothing like the past six years. How the Church gathers, how the Church worships, how the Church serves, how ministry is funded have changed and will continue to change. I invite each congregation in the EAND Synod to dare to seek new ways to cooperate and address ways to better connect and act as the body of Christ for the sake of our neighbors.

I draw on 28 years of congregational ministry serving in two-point solo, associate, interim, and senior pastor roles. I listen to colleagues and siblings in Christ who help me see the Church from the perspective of people with experiences that differ from my own.

10. Describe your leadership style. (1,000 characters maximum)

When I identify the opportunity - I invite other leaders to see the possibilities. We invite expanding participation in the blossoming of a new creation. We refine plans together. I say, "Here's a starting point. It can only get better from here."

When someone else identifies the challenge - I listen and ask thoughtful questions. I discern my role (to fix, to confront, to redirect, to step to the side). I invite participation from people who can impact the situation in positive ways.

I pay attention to the process so it is fair and faithful. I express gratitude.

THIRTY-EIGHTH ANNUAL ASSEMBLY
of the
EASTERN NORTH DAKOTA SYNOD OF THE ELCA
HOLIDAY INN - FARGO, NORTH DAKOTA
JUNE 7th & 8th, 2025

MINUTES FOR REVIEW BY SYNOD ASSEMBLY

"GRACE UPON GRACE"

Saturday, June 7th, 2025

Voting Member Registration opened from 6:00 -7:00 p.m. Friday, June 6th and re-opened at 7:30 a.m. Saturday, June 7th.

OPENING WORSHIP – 9:00 a.m.

Synod Assembly opened with worship, with Bishop Tessa Moon Leiseth preaching on John 1:1-5,14, 16. Worship leadership was provided by Rev. Amy Kippen and musicians from Hope Lutheran Church in Fargo. Offerings given at both the opening and closing worships will be designated to the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Central African Republic for education priorities including the high school library and computer lab.

PLENARY ONE – 9:53 a.m.

Bishop Tessa Moon Leiseth formally opened the Assembly at 9:56 a.m.

FIRST CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE REPORT:

Rev. Julie Johnson, Chairperson of the Credentials Committee, gave the first report of the Credentials Committee as follows:

VOTING MEMBERS	
<i>Rostered Leaders</i>	62
<i>Lay</i>	176
Total Voting Members	238

Note: *The Credentials Committee also reported that there were 15 visitors present, bringing the total attendance to 253.*

Bishop Tessa Moon Leiseth declared a quorum present.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND THE RULES OF PROCEDURE:

SA.25.06.01 The Eastern North Dakota Synod Council moved to adopt the Agenda, so no second is required. **MOTION CARRIED** see *attached*

SA.25.06.02 The Eastern North Dakota Synod Council moved to adopt the Rules of Procedure as presented, so no second is required. **MOTION CARRIED** see *attached*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Bishop Tessa Moon Leiseth recognized Rev. Janelle Hansen, Rev. Sue Peterson-Koesterman, Rev. Linda Molitor, Rev. Steven Dunkel, Rev. Amy Eisenmann, Rev. Louis Moehlman, and Rev. Steve DeKrey. She also recognized the work of Dr. Phyllis Johnson who serves as an intern in the Synod.

Bishop Tessa Moon Leiseth also led a time of remembrance for Rostered Ministers who died in the last year, naming Rev. Galen Kuhens, Rev. Wilbur Fisher, Rev. Roger Livdahl, Rev. Harold Vold, and Rev. James Alger.

The Synod gave thanks for the mission and ministry of Trinity Lutheran Church, Litchville (9/8/2024), Ascension Lutheran Church, Emerado (9/8/2024), Elim Lutheran Church, Fargo (12/15/2024), Walcott Lutheran Church (4/27/2025), and Hickson Lutheran Church (5/18/2025) that experienced Holy Closure in the past year.

Finally, Bishop Tessa Moon Leiseth welcomed guests to the Assembly, and recognized the Synod Council and Staff.

REPORT OF THE ELECTIONS/NOMINATING COMMITTEE:

Rev. Louis Moehlman presented the Election and Nominating Committees' report.

The Nominating Committee presented the following names for the Eastern North Dakota Synod Committee on Discipline: Rev. Nancy Monke (Rostered).

The Synod Council has nominated Nancy Farnham for Synod Secretary.

The Synod Council has nominated Ron Twedt for Synod Treasurer.

The Nominating Committee presented the following name for Youth Representative to the Eastern North Dakota Synod Council: Clara Kjelland.

The Nominating Committee presented the following name for Multicultural Representative to the Eastern North Dakota Synod Council: Merlyn Greene.

All of these positions require election from the assembly. Elections for these roles will take place during Plenary Two.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY:

Rev. Kristina Weber, Interim Secretary to the Synod, presented the minutes from the 2024 Synod Assembly and thanked the past and current year’s Minutes Committees for their work. A Summary of Actions of the Synod Council since last year’s Assembly can be found in the Voting Member Packet.

SA.25.06.03 The Eastern North Dakota Synod Council moved to accept the minutes of the 2024 Synod Assembly as presented, so no second is required. **MOTION CARRIED** see *attached*

BREAK – 10:15 a.m.

CONFERENCE CAUCUSING – 10:45 a.m.

KEYNOTE – 11:30 a.m.

Rev. Timothy Brown, ELCA Director of Congregational Stewardship, presented the first keynote of the Assembly. He invited attendees to share stories answering the question: who taught you to be generous? In the waters of baptism, we are taught to live for wisdom and understanding, live for self-giving love, live for peace, and live for justice. He encouraged attendees to tell stories of lives changed and mission activated by generosity in our congregations and communities.

LUNCH BREAK – 12:25 p.m.

STATE OF THE SYNOD – 1:15 p.m.

Bishop Tessa Moon Leiseth reported on the state of the Synod using themes drawn out during the Strategic Planning Process: investing in robust, diverse, and well-equipped leadership for each ministry; radically connecting the people of God; living with extravagant grace as the Body of Christ; and flourishing as a vital church into the future.

During her report, she spoke of the Synod as an ecosystem through which we are interconnected in leadership, connectivity, grace and vitality.

ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS – 2:00 p.m.

Rev. Brad Skogen led the recognition of congregational milestones and ordination anniversaries as listed below:

<p style="text-align: center;">10 Years of Service</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Rev. Natalie Carlson Rev. Lori Pankratz Rev. Susan Anderson Deacon Erin Power</p>
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<p>25 Years of Service</p> <p>Rev. Erick J Thompson Rev. Beth Peterson Rev. Gwenn Bazajou Rev. Thea Monson</p>
<p>50 Years of Service</p> <p>Rev. Harold Ovre Rev. Jeffry Macejkovic Rev. Randall Schlecht</p>
<p>60 Years of Service</p> <p>Rev. John Jorgensen</p>
<p>125 Years of Ministry</p> <p>Bethel Lutheran Church, Rogers Lakota Lutheran Church, Lakota Martin Luther Lutheran Church, Fredonia St. John Lutheran Church, Embden</p>
<p>75 Years of Ministry</p> <p>Messiah Evangelical Lutheran Church, Fargo Our Saviour's Lutheran, Sanborn University Lutheran Church, Grand Forks</p>

BREAK – 2:15 p.m.

PLENARY TWO – 2:30 p.m.

SECOND CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE REPORT:

Rev. Julie Johnson, Chairperson of the Credentials Committee, gave the second report of the Credentials Committee as follows:

VOTING MEMBERS	
<i>Rostered Leaders</i>	69
<i>Lay</i>	176
Total Voting Members	245

Note: The Credentials Committee also reported that there were 16 visitors present, bringing the total attendance to 261.

REPORT OF THE TREASURER:

Mr. Joe Askew, Synod Treasurer, gave a report on the Endowment, Synod funding and expenditures, the Mission Plan for Fiscal Year End (FYE) January 31st, 2025, and the current Mission Plan.

The combined Eastern North Dakota Synod Endowments held a balance of \$5,139,245 as of January 31st, 2025. The 2024 Vital Leaders Endowment Fund disbursed \$175,904 in five areas: Internship Site Grants, Leadership Development, Loan Repayment Grants, Pension Equity, and Seminary Student Aid.

The annual audit has been performed by Widmer Roel, CPA's and Business Advisors. The synod received an unmodified opinion for our last fiscal year. An unmodified opinion provides a reasonable level of assurance from the auditor that the financial statements present a true and fair reflection of our results for the time period reported. This is the highest opinion obtainable. The Synod received this opinion for the past eight years.

Joe Askew shared the approved, revised, and audited Mission Plan for FYE January 31st, 2025.

The year ended with a \$29,812 deficit. The Synod Council voted to transfer \$29,812 of restricted funds from the Native American Ministries account and Campus Ministries to cover the deficits in those areas. A more detailed walkthrough of the balance sheet and Mission Plan will be held during this afternoon's workshops.

SA.25.06.04 Rev. Kyle Giermann, Kindred Lutheran, Kindred, moved and it was seconded to receive the Treasurer's Report as presented. **MOTION CARRIED**

PRESENTATION OF THE 2026 PROPOSED MISSION PLAN:

Mr. Joe Askew, Treasurer to the Synod, presented the 2026 (FYE 1/31/27) Proposed Synod Mission Plan, which will be voted on during Plenary Three.

Areas of note for the 2026 Proposed Mission Plan include:

- Thanks to congregations for giving more than in the previous year.
- A challenge to congregations to prayerfully consider an increase in your support of mission together.
- Synod Ministry Partner Support remains consistent with the previous year.
- Maintained Churchwide Mission support at 44%.

REPORT OF THE ELECTIONS/NOMINATING COMMITTEE:

Rev. Louis Moehlman presented the Election and Nominating Committees' report and the final ballot for the Synod Secretary, Synod Treasurer, Synod Council, and the Committee on Discipline. The nominees are reflected below:

NOMINEE FOR SYNOD SECRETARY (four-year term):

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

Nancy Farnham

NOMINEE FOR SYNOD TREASURER (four-year term):

+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.

Ron Twedt

NOMINEES FOR EASTERN NORTH DAKOTA SYNOD COUNCIL (two-year term):

S10.07.01.b. One minister of Word and Sacrament and/or minister of Word and Service and one lay person from each conference nominated at the Conference Assembly and elected by the Synod Assembly. The terms of conference representatives shall be two years, with term of office arranged so that half of the terms expire annually. Each representative shall be eligible for two consecutive re-elections.

Prairie Rose Conference: Rev. Gary Lundberg (Rostered)

Spirit Lake Conference: Richard Persky (Lay)

Fargo Conference: Kim Thompson (Lay)

Grafton Conference: Rev. Beth Peterson (Rostered)

Grand Forks Conference: Julie Pedersen (Lay)

Jamestown Conference: Rev. Lucinda Lien (Rostered)

Mayville Conference: Christopher Larson (Lay) and Rev. Rachael Puttbrese (Rostered)

NOMINEE FOR YOUTH REPRESENTATIVE TO SYNOD COUNCIL (one-year term):

S10.07.01.c. Each youth member of the Synod Council shall be a voting member, elected by the Synod Assembly for a one-year term and eligible for two consecutive re-elections.

Clara Kjelland

NOMINEE FOR MULTICULTURAL REPRESENTATIVE TO SYNOD COUNCIL (two-year term):

S10.07.01.e. Two lay representatives who are persons of color and/or whose primary language is other than English. These representatives shall be elected by the Synod Assembly for a two-year term. Each representative shall be eligible for two consecutive re-elections.

Merlyn Greene

NOMINEES FOR EASTERN NORTH DAKOTA SYNOD COMMITTEE ON DISCIPLINE (six-year term):

*+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.*

Rev. Nancy Monke

Voting will be done electronically. Go to the business table if you do not have a personal device. You must use your voting ID Number found on your name tag. Ballot is open until 6:00 pm tonight. Voting members may only vote once.

Tim Schroeder, Portico Regional Representative, addressed the Assembly. He is available to answer questions at the Sunday workshop or at the display table.

RESOLUTION:

Bishop Tessa Moon Leiseth invited Rev. Beth Peterson from the Committee on Reference and Counsel to the stage to present Resolution #1 for consideration and adoption.

RESOLUTION #1: 2026 Compensation and Policy Guidelines for Rostered Ministers & Lay Paid Staff

WHEREAS, congregations of the Eastern North Dakota Synod request and appreciate the aid and counsel of their companion congregations in this synod and synod leadership in ascertaining fair, equitable, and adequate compensation and benefits for Rostered Ministers and professional staff; and

WHEREAS, the Eastern North Dakota Synod Council has discussed and approved these guidelines and commends them to the 2025 Eastern North Dakota Synod Assembly and to the congregations of this synod for deliberation and use; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the 2025 Eastern North Dakota Synod Assembly adopt, approve, and commend to the congregations of this synod these guidelines; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this assembly approve the publication and distribution of these "Guidelines" to congregations of this synod through the usual and appropriate means employed by the synod office.

Submitted by the Eastern North Dakota Synod Council

SA.25.06.05 The Eastern North Dakota Synod Council moved to adopt Resolution #1, so no second is required. After discussion and amendments to the addendum, the **MOTION CARRIED** see amended addendum: *Proposed 2026 Compensation and Policy Guidelines for Rostered Ministers and Lay Paid Staff*

Bishop Tessa Moon Leiseth invited Pastor Cassie Borges to lead the Assembly in prayer.

STATE OF THE ELCA – 3:25 p.m.

Rev. Timothy Brown, ELCA Director of Congregational Stewardship, gave the state of the ELCA presentation. He brought greetings from the Alaska Synod and the ELCA Churchwide Office and Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton.

In 2024, ELCA World Hunger recognized 50 years of working together to address the root causes of hunger and poverty around the world. God's Love Made Real is shorthand for the ELCA's vision statement and encompasses all the ways our congregations, synods and ministries are helping the world around us know the love of God in Jesus. At the 2025 Churchwide Assembly, voting members will address the social statement on civic life and faith, the relationship of church and state, and related matters, as called for by the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly. Additionally, the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church (CRLC) will present their recommendations reconsidering the statements of purpose for each of the expressions of the church and the principles of its organizational structure. The Churchwide Assembly will recognize the 1700th anniversary of the Nicene Creed. The presentation closed with a video greeting from the ELCA Churchwide Office and Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton.

MISSION PLAN FORUM – 3:47 p.m.

The forum provided an opportunity for voting members to ask questions about the proposed Mission Plan.

BREAK – 4:00 p.m.

WORKSHOPS – 4:30 p.m.

The Assembly was encouraged to attend one of the following workshops:

Narrative Budgets: Telling the Story Behind Each Line Item (Saturday and Sunday)

Presented by: Pastor Lexy Steinle

Some things are easier to fund than others. The local homeless shelter seems more in line for what Jesus calls us to give to than lights, floor wax, and water bills. And yet, even these "less attractive" line items help tell the story of the church's mission in the world today. This workshop will introduce Narrative Budgets, show multiple examples of ways this tool can be used in a variety of contexts, and walk through what putting together one in your church could look like! Lay and clergy members will find helpful tools for ministries of all sizes.

Synod Lay Ministry Cohort in Sargent County (Saturday and Sunday)

Presented by: Cohort Participants

Come to hear the story that started as a conversation at Nazareth Lutheran in Cogswell and now has 12 Synod Lay Ministers from 5 congregations! Congregations in Sargent County partnered with the synod to provide local training for Synod Lay Ministry over the past two years. The story continues to unfold, and we hope to be able to share Part II in the future.

Disability Dialogue: A Conversation (Saturday and Sunday)

Presented by: Hannah Papenfuss and Pastor Nicholas Rohde

Join us for a conversation about our experiences and reflections around disability and the church as well as actions and next steps for congregations and leaders. This workshop will be podcast style for a future resource and will include a disability dialogue, a time for “clunky questions”, a brief dive into healing narratives, and finishing with what we can do next.

Finance Forum (Saturday only)

Presented by: Joe Askew, Synod Treasurer

Join our synod treasurer to take a closer look at the financial report that will be shared during Plenary 2. This will be a great opportunity to ask questions, take a closer look at the material, and learn more. There will also be time to walk through the proposed Mission Plan, (budget) for FYE 1- 31-27.

Congregations Considering or Providing a Community Social Ministry (Saturday only)

Presented by: Murray Sagsveen, Western North Dakota Synod Attorney

Synod Attorney Murray Sagsveen, Western North Dakota Synod, will address organizational, risk management, volunteer management, legal, corporate, and other issues for congregations that are considering or are providing a ministry to their community, such as a food bank, thrift store, weekend backpack program, and care for cemeteries. He will explain key concepts, then answer questions from the participants.

Strategic Plan Information Session (Saturday only)

Presented by: Bishop Tessa Moon Leiseth

The synod spoke and a strategic plan was created! Come to learn more about what hundreds of people across the synod said was important for our shared ministry and life together in Eastern North Dakota and how we are living into it. There will be an opportunity for questions.

CREATION CELEBRATION – 6:00 p.m.

Synod Assembly participants are invited to participate in a Creation Celebration, hosted at St. John’s Lutheran Church. Activities include yard games, upcycled crafts, food provided by Tee’s Tacos, and a variety of booths including beekeeping, vegetarian cooking, tiny homes, community gardens, and native plant gardens.

Sunday, June 8th, 2025

COFFEE SOCIAL – 8:00 a.m.

KEYNOTE – 8:30 a.m.

Rev. Timothy Brown, presented the second keynote of the Assembly. Drawing from Acts 4:32-37, Genesis 2:1-24, Matthew 2:1-12, and Luke 19:1-10, Rev. Brown invited the Assembly to explore stories in the Bible as stewardship stories asking the questions: what are they doing (in this story) and why are they doing it? He encouraged the assembly to frame what happens in the congregation (lives changed) as a thank you to God.

PLENARY THREE – 9:30 a.m.

THIRD CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE REPORT:

Rev. Julie Johnson, Chairperson of the Credentials Committee, gave the third report of the Credentials Committee as follows:

VOTING MEMBERS	
<i>Rostered Leaders</i>	70
<i>Lay</i>	177
Total Voting Members	247

Note: The Credentials Committee also reported that there were 16 visitors present, bringing the total attendance to 263.

REPORT OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

Dr. Elna Solvang gave the report of the Synod Vice President. Drawing from John 1:16 (grace upon grace) and Ecclesiastes 2:23 (even at night their minds do not rest), Dr. Solvang emphasized the commitment to dignity and trustworthiness in congregations in times of joy and challenge, gave thanks to volunteers and synod staff, and reminded the assembly of our invitation to walk together with all persons created in the image of God.

ADOPTION OF THE 2026 SYNOD MISSION PLAN:

Bishop Tessa Moon Leiseth invited Mr. Joe Askew to the stage to answer questions pertinent to the proposed 2026 Mission Plan.

SA 25.06.06 The Eastern North Dakota Synod Council moved to adopt the 2026 Synod Mission Plan (FYE 1/31/2027), so no second is required. After discussion, the **MOTION CARRIED** as presented. see *attached*

Bishop Tessa Moon Leiseth expressed gratitude to Joe Askew for his 8 years of service to the synod as Treasurer tending to the financial well-being of the synod.

\$4,000 was donated to the Endowment Sustaining Fund in honor of Joe’s service.

Joe shared his gratitude through stories and words of appreciation.

ELECTION RESULTS:

Rev. Louis Moehlman shared the results from the first common ballot.

Note: Vote totals for each candidate are reflected in bold and parenthesis. There were 220 total ballots cast. 14 were invalid. There were 206 valid ballots cast.

NOMINEE FOR SYNOD SECRETARY (four-year term):

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

Nancy Farnham **(205)**

Bishop Tessa Moon Leiseth declared that Nancy Farnham was elected Eastern North Dakota Synod Secretary.

NOMINEE FOR SYNOD TREASURER (four-year term):

+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.

Ron Twedt **(206)**

Bishop Tessa Moon Leiseth declared that Ron Twedt was elected Eastern North Dakota Synod Treasurer.

NOMINEES FOR EASTERN NORTH DAKOTA SYNOD COUNCIL (two-year term):

S10.07.01 b. One minister of Word and Sacrament and/or minister of Word and Service and one lay person from each conference nominated at the Conference Assembly and elected by the Synod Assembly. The terms of conference representatives shall be two years, with term of office arranged so that half of the terms expire annually. Each representative shall be eligible for two consecutive re-elections.

Prairie Rose Conference: Rev. Gary Lundberg (Rostered) **(201)**
Spirit Lake Conference: Richard Persky (Lay) **(202)**
Fargo Conference: Kim Thompson (Lay) **(203)**

Grafton Conference: Rev. Beth Peterson (Rostered) (202)
Grand Forks Conference: Julie Pedersen (Lay) (203)
Jamestown Conference: Rev. Lucinda Lien (Rostered) (202)
Mayville Conference: Rev. Rachael Puttbrese (Rostered) (201)
Mayville Conference: Christopher Larson (Lay) (201)

Bishop Tessa Moon Leiseth declared that Gary Lundberg, Richard Persky, Kim Thompson, Rev. Beth Peterson, Julie Pedersen, Rev. Lucinda Lien, Rev. Rachael Puttbrese, and Christopher Larson were elected to the Eastern North Dakota Synod Council as Conference Representatives.

NOMINEE FOR YOUTH REPRESENTATIVE TO SYNOD COUNCIL (one-year term):

S10.07.01.c. Each youth member of the Synod Council shall be a voting member, elected by the Synod Assembly for a one-year term and eligible for two consecutive re-elections.

Clara Kjelland (203)

Bishop Tessa Moon Leiseth declared that Clara Kjelland was elected to the Eastern North Dakota Synod Council.

NOMINEE FOR MULTICULTURAL REPRESENTATIVE TO SYNOD COUNCIL (two-year term):

S10.07.01.e. Two lay representatives who are persons of color and/or whose primary language is other than English. These representatives shall be elected by the Synod Assembly for a two-year term. Each representative shall be eligible for two consecutive re-elections.

Merlyn Greene (203)

Bishop Tessa Moon Leiseth declared that Merlyn Greene was elected to the Eastern North Dakota Synod Council.

NOMINEE FOR EASTERN NORTH DAKOTA SYNOD COMMITTEE ON DISCIPLINE (six-year term):

*+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.*

Rev. Nancy Monke (201)

Bishop Tessa Moon Leiseth declared that Rev. Nancy Monke was elected to the Eastern North Dakota Synod Committee on Discipline.

SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS – 10:15 a.m.

Bishop Tessa Moon Leiseth invited Ryu Kroshus to the stage to present the 2025 Bread of Life Award to Faith Lutheran, Hannaford. The following churches were also recognized for their generosity to hunger ministries:

Washington Lutheran, Northwood
Trinity Lutheran, Binford

Trinity Lutheran, Marion
St. John Lutheran, Fargo

Bishop Tessa Moon Leiseth invited Dr. Phyllis Johnson to the stage to present the Care for Creation Award to Faith Lutheran, Valley City.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Deacon Laura Carson thanked Rev. Cassie Anderson, Rev. Kayla Hill, Rev. Brooke Phelps, Alice Senechal, worship planners and leaders Rev. Robert Franek, Rev. Ella Moehlman, and Rev. Val Teppo, volunteers, and Synod Staff for their leadership during Assembly. She also thanked the Assembly production team, Livewire, for their handling of all video, sound, lighting, staging, and streaming logistics. Next year's Assembly will be held June 5th–7th, 2026.

BREAK 10:25

WORKSHOPS – 10:30 a.m.

The Assembly was encouraged to attend one of the workshops described previously or one of the workshops listed below:

Narrative Budgets: Telling the Story Behind Each Line Item (Saturday and Sunday)

Presented by: Pastor Lexy Steinle

Synod Lay Ministry Cohort in Sargent County (Saturday and Sunday)

Presented by: Cohort Participants

Disability Dialogue: A Conversation (Saturday and Sunday)

Presented by: Hannah Papenfuss and Pastor Nicholas Rohde

Portico Benefits Q & A (Sunday only)

Presented by: Pastor Tim Schroeder, Regional Representative

Do you have questions about upcoming health plan changes? Are you thinking about retirement in the next few years and haven't been able to attend a pre-retirement workshop? Or are you just hoping to learn a new thing about making the most of your benefits? Bring your questions and have our Regional Representative, Rev. Tim Schroeder, help with some answers!

Best Practices for Congregation Leaders (Sunday only)

Presented by: Murray Sagsveen, Western North Dakota Synod Attorney

Murray Sagsveen will address best practices for congregation leaders, particularly members of congregation councils. He will focus on constitutional responsibilities, internal controls,

adopting policies through continuing resolutions, risk management, volunteer management, organizational audits, leadership development, and other corporate issues. He will initially explain key concepts, then will answer questions from the participants.

Listening Session: Congregations without a Minister (Sunday only)

Facilitated by: Janell Regimbal (formerly of LSS-North Dakota)

Are you without a regular pastor in your congregation? What are your experiences and challenges in ministry without a regular minister? What are your future aspirations? How does this impact your ministry and what does synod leadership need to know about your experience? Come for a facilitated small group listening session to share your input. There is room for 15 attendees. Additional listening sessions will be offered this summer throughout the synod.

CLOSING WORSHIP – 11:30 a.m.

The Assembly closed its time together in worship. Rev. Timothy Brown, ELCA Director of Congregational Stewardship, preached on Pentecost referring to readings from Acts 2:1-21 and John 14:8-27. Bishop Tessa Moon Leiseth presided at the table, with Madi Wutzke, Glory Godwin Lekashu, and Nick Stanley assisting in worship. Breanna Briedenbach and Ryu Kroshus led music for worship.

Offerings from both opening and closing worship totaled \$10,640.27 and will be designated to the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Central African Republic for education priorities including the high school library and computer lab.

CLOSING OF THE ASSEMBLY

Bishop Tessa Moon Leiseth closed the assembly at 12:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Rev. Kristina Weber, Interim Synod Secretary



Eastern North Dakota Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

Mission Plan 1-31-2027 and 1-31-2028

Eastern North Dakota Synod of the ELCA

	1/31/26 Actual Mission Plan	1/31/27 Assembly Approved Mission Plan	1/31/27 Council Revised Mission Plan	1/31/28 Council Proposed Mission Plan
Revenue and Other Support				
Congregational Mission Support	776,370	800,000	800,000	800,000
Synod Only Support	124,701	120,000	125,000	125,000
Synod Assembly Revenue	49,855	60,000	60,000	55,000
ELCA Churchwide Grants	119,913	112,687	113,758	115,643
CARES Grant/Retention Credit				
Event Revenue	66,077	57,000	70,000	70,000
Giving Hearts Day	58,141	80,000	75,000	75,000
Individual Giving	75,472	121,500	121,500	121,500
Miscellaneous Restricted Funds Transfer	8,350			
Designated Gifts NAM/Campus Ministries	24,269	25,000	25,000	25,000
Endowment Revenue	4,675	2,000	5,000	7,500
Ministry Partner Support - Restricted Revenue	11,843	23,000	20,000	20,000
Other Revenue	26,858	22,000	22,000	22,000
Total Revenue and Other Support	1,346,523	1,423,187	1,437,258	1,436,643
ELCA Churchwide Support*	341,603	352,000	352,000	352,000
Region 3 Archives	7,865	8,000	7,756	7,756
Campus Ministry	106,000	106,000	106,000	106,000
Dacotah O'yate	53,581	52,000	63,200	63,200
Native American Christian Ministry	6,000	6,000	6,000	6,000
Luther Seminary	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
Neighborhood Church	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000
South Sudan Lutheran	1,352	5,000	5,000	5,000
Outdoor Ministry	6,278	4,000	4,000	4,000
Reconciling Works	500	500	500	500
Total Ministry Support	530,178	540,500	551,456	551,456

Color Key	
	Mission Support & Revenue
	Churchwide Ministries
	Ministry Partners
	Synod Outreach & Support of Congregations

	1/31/26 Actual Mission Plan	1/31/27 Assembly Approved Mission Plan	1/31/27 Council Revised Mission Plan	1/31/28 Council Proposed Mission Plan
Council/Committee/Event Expenses				
Synod Council	4,698	3,500	5,000	5,000
Standing Committees:				
Candidacy	13,752	10,000	10,000	10,000
Global Mission	0	750	0	0
Action & Advocacy	891	750	1,000	1,000
Synod Lay Ministry	2,167	500	2,000	2,000
Event Expenses	65,404	52,000	70,000	70,000
Development Initiatives	2,042	3,500	3,500	3,500
Pastoral Care	178	1,000	1,000	1,000
Total Council/Comm/Event Expense	89,131	72,000	92,500	92,500
Supporting Services Expenses				
Staff Compensation & Benefits	579,347	645,000	660,000	660,000
Community Engagement Pastor				
DEM Support	5,737	10,000	9,500	9,500
Depreciation	14,346	12,000	11,000	6,000
Discretionary Fund	1,484	1,000	1,000	1,000
General Office Expense	12,203	15,000	21,000	18,000
Insurance	8,287	10,000	10,000	10,000
Office Rent & Utilities	41,362	43,500	43,500	45,000
Professional Fees	28,993	42,000	35,000	35,000
Synod Assembly	43,117	51,000	55,000	47,500
Travel/Vehicles	9,939	18,000	12,500	12,500
Bishop/Staff Transition Expenses	0	3,000	3,000	3,000
Total Supporting Services Expenses	744,815	850,500	861,500	847,500
Total Expenses	833,946	922,500	954,000	940,000

Total Ministry Support & Expenses	1,364,124	1,463,000	1,505,456	1,491,456
Nonoperating Income (Interest)	22,016	22,000	21,000	21,000
Nonoperating Expenses	4,412			
Net Assets Audit Adjustment				
Change in Net Assets	2	-17,813	-47,198	-33,813

RESOLUTION #1 Constitution Changes from 2025 Churchwide Assembly

WHEREAS, the model constitution for Synods has been revised by the Office of the Secretary of the ELCA to reflect the changes voted on by the 2025 Churchwide Assembly; and

WHEREAS, the Eastern North Dakota Synod Council has discussed and approved the non-required amendments and commends them to the 2026 Eastern North Dakota Synod Assembly; therefore be it

RESOLVED, to adopt the following non-required amendments to the Constitution for Synods that were approved by the 2025 Churchwide Assembly:

- S7.26.** This synod may establish processes through the Synod Council that permit persons currently serving as synod-authorized ministers and/or lay representatives of authorized worshiping communities and/or outreach ministries of the synod, which have been authorized under ELCA bylaw 10.01.04., to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, consistent with +S7.21.
- S9.04.** The bishop shall be elected by the Synod Assembly. 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 (including ties in the final qualifying position) on the second ballot, and two-thirds of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. The fourth ballot shall be limited to the three persons (plus ties) who receive the greatest number of legal votes (including ties in the final qualifying position) on the third ballot, and 60 percent of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. On subsequent ballots a majority of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. These ballots shall be limited to the two persons (plus ties) who receive the greatest number of legal votes (including ties in the final qualifying position) on the previous ballot.
- S10.05.** ~~No e~~ Elected members of the Synod Council shall not receive compensation solely for such their service as council members.
- S10.06.** No person related to a synod staff member shall be eligible for nomination to or membership on the Synod Council or the following synod committees: Consultation Committee, Committee on Discipline, Audit Committee, or Nominating Committee. For this purpose, a related individual is one who, with respect to the synod employee, is a spouse, parent, son, daughter, sibling, uncle, aunt, niece, nephew, grandparent, grandchild, including corresponding members of blended families and in-laws (parent, son, daughter, or sibling of a spouse, spouse of a sibling, or the parent or sibling of the spouse of a sibling).
- S10.0607.** If a member...
- S10.0607.01.** Upon two successive...
- S10.0607.02.** The Synod Council...
- S10.0708.** The composition of...



- S10.0708.01. The Synod Council...
- S10.0708.02. Terms of office...
- S10.0708.03. There shall be...
- S10.0708.04. The Synod Council...
- S10.0708.05. Chairpersons of the...
- S10.0809. *Robert's Rules of...*
- S13.40. Synod-authorized Worshiping Communities and Outreach Ministries
- S13.41. Authorized worshiping Worshiping communities and outreach ministries, authorized by the synod and acknowledged under criteria, policies, and procedures approved by the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, shall accept and adhere to the Confession of Faith and Statement of Purpose of this church, shall be served by leadership under the criteria of this church, and shall be subject to the discipline of this church.

Submitted by the Eastern North Dakota Synod Council

ADDENDUM:

EaND Synod Constitution with updates for 2026 Synod Assembly

RESOLUTION #2 Amendment to Bylaw S11.02

WHEREAS, the Eastern North Dakota Synod Constitution required provision +S11.02 states that the synod shall define the size of the Consultation Committee in the bylaws; and

WHEREAS, the current bylaw is out of order by only listing ministers of Word and Sacrament and limits the number of committee members to only six; and

WHEREAS, the Eastern North Dakota Synod Council has discussed and approved the bylaw change and commends it to the 2026 Eastern North Dakota Synod Assembly; therefore be it

RESOLVED, to adopt the following amendment to bylaw S11.02.01.:

S11.02.01. The Consultation Committee shall ~~be consist of at least~~ six persons ~~and not more than 12 persons~~, of whom ~~three half~~ shall be ministers of Word and Sacrament ~~rostered~~ ministers and ~~three half~~ shall be lay persons.

Submitted by the Eastern North Dakota Synod Council

ADDENDUM:

EaND Synod Constitution with updates for 2026 Synod Assembly



RESOLUTION #3 2027 Compensation and Policy Guidelines for Rostered Ministers & Lay Paid Staff

WHEREAS, congregations of the Eastern North Dakota Synod request and appreciate the aid and counsel of their companion congregations in this synod and synod leadership in ascertaining fair, equitable, and adequate compensation and benefits for Rostered Ministers and professional staff; and

WHEREAS, the Eastern North Dakota Synod Council has discussed and approved these guidelines and commends them to the 2026 Eastern North Dakota Synod Assembly and to the congregations of this synod for deliberation and use; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the 2026 Eastern North Dakota Synod Assembly adopt, approve, and commend to the congregations of this synod these guidelines; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this assembly approve the publication and distribution of these “Guidelines” to congregations of this synod through the usual and appropriate means employed by the synod office.

Submitted by the Eastern North Dakota Synod Council

ADDENDUM:

Proposed 2027 Compensation and Policy Guidelines for Rostered Ministers and Lay Paid Staff



RESOLUTION #4 Skjeberg Lutheran Church

WHEREAS, Skjeberg Lutheran Church has requested a transfer from the Eastern North Dakota Synod to the Northwestern Minnesota Synod; and

WHEREAS, Skjeberg Lutheran Church is physically located in Minnesota and is no longer in a parish agreement with Drayton Lutheran Church in North Dakota; and

WHEREAS, the Northwestern Minnesota Synod is voting to receive Skjeberg Lutheran Church at their Synod Assembly on May 30, 2026; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the 2026 Eastern North Dakota Synod Assembly release Skjeberg Lutheran Church as a congregation of this synod.

Submitted by the Eastern North Dakota Synod Council



Eastern North Dakota Synod

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Eastern North Dakota Synod Staff

Bishop Tessa Moon Leiseth

Deacon Laura Carson, Associate with the Bishop for Formation and Administration

Pastor Brad Skogen, Associate with the Bishop for Congregational Leadership and Transition

Deacon Erin Power, Director for Evangelical Mission

Deacon Alex Benson, Connections Coordinator & First Call Theological Education Coordinator

Marietta Wahl, Finance Manager

Katie DeMarais, Synod Lay Ministry Coordinator

Jen Engquist, Disaster Capacity Builder

Lacey Kraft, Director of Generosity

Pastor Nancy Monke, CaSTLE Grant Mentor Coach and Developer

Pastor Robert Franek, Congregational Relator

Eastern North Dakota Synod Council

Bishop Tessa Moon Leiseth

Dr. Elna Solvang, Vice President

Nancy Farnham, Secretary

Ron Twedt, Treasurer

Prairie Rose Conference: **Pastor Gary Lundberg** and **Marvin Goplin**

Spirit Lake Conference: **Pastor Lori Pankratz** and **Richard Persky**

Fargo Conference: **Pastor Sue Koesterman** and **Kim Thompson**

Grafton Conference: **Pastor Kayla Hill** and **Susan Degner**

Grand Forks Conference: **Pastor Jo Gast** and **Julie Pedersen**

Jamestown Conference: **Pastor Lucinda Lien** and **Jon Lillejord**

Mayville Conference: **Pastor Penny Millspaugh** and **Chris Larson**

Wahpeton Conference: **Pastor Julie Johnson** and **Joleen Hardy**

Merlyn Greene, Multicultural Representative

Ryu Kroshus, Multicultural Representative

Jenna Larson, Young Adult Representative

Clara Kjelland, Youth Representative

2026 Synod Assembly Committees

Committee on Minutes

The **Committee on Minutes** shall consist of two ministers of Word and Sacrament and/or ministers of Word and Service and three laypersons appointed by the bishop.

Rev. Stephanie Gossett
Rev. Julie Johnson
Ryu Kroshus
Laurie Barlow
Tom Farnham

Credentials Committee

The **Credentials Committee** shall consist of two ministers of Word and Sacrament and/or ministers of Word and Service and three laypersons appointed by the bishop. This committee shall examine the applications and credentials of voting members to the Synod Assembly and report to the assembly.

Rev. Julie Johnson, chair
Taryn Jensen
Pam Maloney
Inez Olson

Reference and Counsel

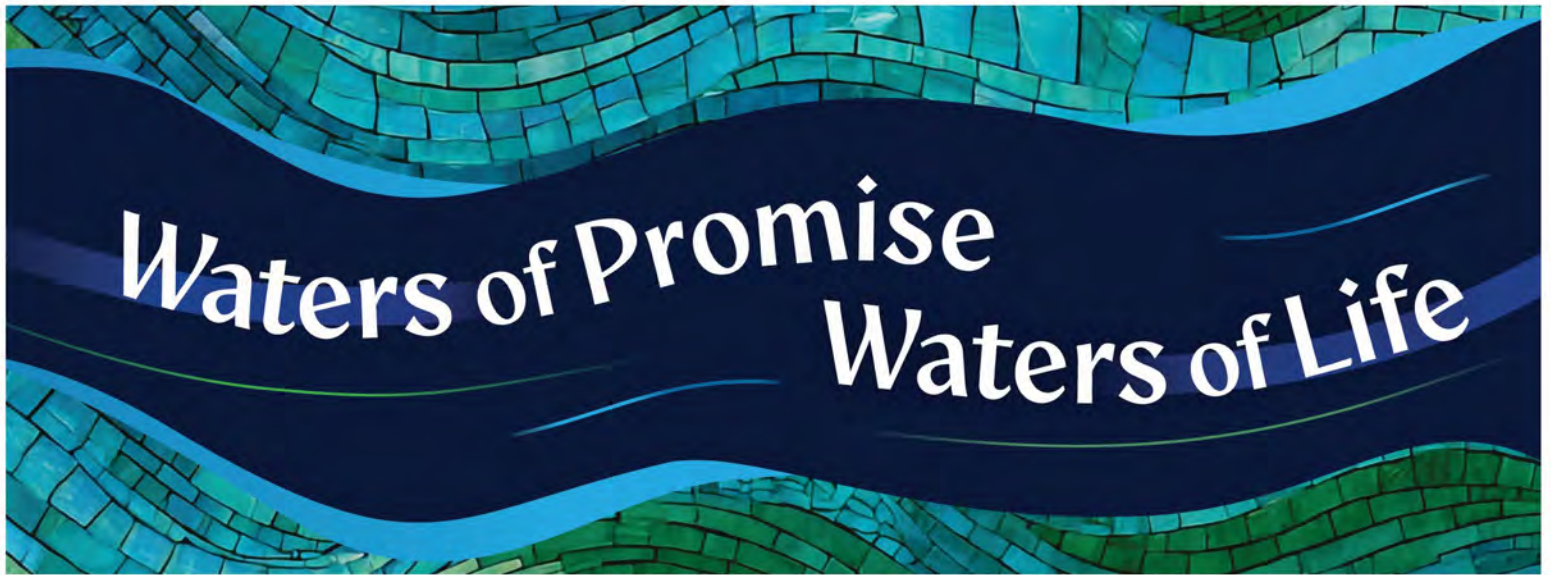
The **Committee on Reference and Counsel** shall carry on the work of the Resolutions Committee during the Synod Assembly. Representatives from the Resolutions Committee should serve on this committee for continuity. This committee shall consist of two ministers of Word and Sacrament and/or ministers of Word and Service and three laypersons appointed by the bishop.

Rev. Beth Peterson, chair
Rev. David Peterson
Joel Kangas
Jon Lillejord
Nancy Rader

Nominating Committee and Elections Committee

The Nominating Committee serves as the Bishop Election Committee and members are also on the Elections Committee.

Rev. Louis Moehlman, chair
Beth Christianson-Melby
Rev. Tom Colenso
Merlyn Greene
Rev. Janelle Hansen
Bob Schlotman
Rev. Stephanie Tollefson
Alannah Valenta



CONFERENCE MEETING LOCATIONS

FARGO CONFERENCE

Great Hall

GRAFTON CONFERENCE

Mezzanine II

GRAND FORKS CONFERENCE

Directors

JAMESTOWN CONFERENCE

Conference

PRAIRIE ROSE CONFERENCE

Mezzanine III

WAHPTEON CONFERENCE

Prairie

SPIRIT LAKE CONFERENCE

Mezzanine I

MAYVILLE CONFERENCE

Frontier

ROOM LOCATIONS:

Prairie and Frontier are to the right of the check-in area

Directors and Conference are off the main hallway

Mezzanine I, II and III are located upstairs, staircase and elevator near the hotel front desk

Great Hall is the main meeting space. Gather on the north side of the room.

WORKSHOPS

Saturday at 3:00pm and Sunday at 10:30am

Living Our Baptism through Fresh Expressions

Location: Prairie

Presented by: Pastor Jessica Miller

What are different ways we can live out our baptism? Hear stories of "fresh expressions" of church and ideas gleaned from God's ministry at The Neighborhood Church. You will be encouraged to identify at least ONE way you can creatively and contagiously live out your baptism!

Indian Boarding Schools: ELCA Truth Seeking and Truth-Telling Initiative

Location: Frontier

Presented by: Melissa Kornkven

Join this workshop to learn more about the ELCA's Truth-Seeking and Truth-Telling Initiative on Indian Boarding Schools. The ELCA 2025 Churchwide Assembly passed a memorial to equip congregations, synods, and affiliate ministries to observe the September 30 National Day of Remembrance for Indian Boarding Schools. This workshop is a great starting place for individuals and congregations to learn about Lutherans and boarding schools, equip congregations to observe the Day of Remembrance in their various contexts, and maintain the focus on the goal of the initiative: healing. You are invited to join us.

Great Things are Happening at Great Plains Food Bank

Location: Conference

Presented by: Ann Prifrel, CEO and Michelle Watne, Gift Processing Coordinator

This workshop will be educational on the history of Great Plains Food Bank and what we have in store for the future. Many churches in our synod were instrumental in starting food pantries for their communities. Our congregations saw the need and stepped up. See how Great Plains has grown through 41 years of service to ND and Clay County, MN.

Finance Forum*

Location: Mezzanine III

Presented by: Ron Twedt, Synod Treasurer

Join our synod treasurer to take a closer look at the financial report that will be shared during Plenary 4. This is a great opportunity to ask questions and take a closer look at the treasurer's report. There will also be time to walk through the proposed Mission Plan (budget) for FYE 1-31-28.



What is ELCA Sumud: for Justice in Palestine & Israel

Location: Mezzanine I

Presented by: Maddi Froiland, Program Director

Sumud is an initiative of the ELCA which focuses on advocacy, awareness-raising, and accompaniment for justice in Palestine and Israel. Sumud is an Arabic word, meaning steadfastness. The name Sumud came from our partners in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL), who lift up the sumud, or steadfastness that defines faith under occupation. Come hear how the ELCA engages this important justice issue.

The Art of Radical Neighboring

Location: Mezzanine II

Presented by: Deacon Erin Power, Director for Evangelical Mission

Jesus calls us to love and serve our neighbors, but what does that mean in concrete, specific terms in the year 2026? Join this workshop to explore how your congregation or ministry can identify, build, or strengthen partnership and relationships. Explore neighboring both locally and globally, rooted in your particular gifts and resources and leave with ideas and next steps in the art of radical neighboring!

Imagine More: Authentic Faith, Young Adults, and the Future of the Church*

Location: Directors

Presented by: Campus Ministries of the EaND Synod

Young people today are not searching for a perfect church; they are searching for authenticity, belonging, purpose, and communities of support. Join leadership and students from Crossroads at NDSU and Christus Rex at UND and explore what students and young adults are seeking from faith communities, and how congregations can meaningfully partner with campus ministries to support young people during pivotal years of transition and identity formation. The workshop will also include a preview of upcoming opportunities for youth and young adults across the synod and churchwide ministry, including the EAND Fall Youth Retreat and the 2027 ELCA Youth Gathering. Receive practical information, ideas for promotion and fundraising, and strategies for helping young people feel encouraged and supported in saying “yes” to transformational faith experiences.

* This workshop will not be offered on Sunday.

ROOM LOCATIONS:

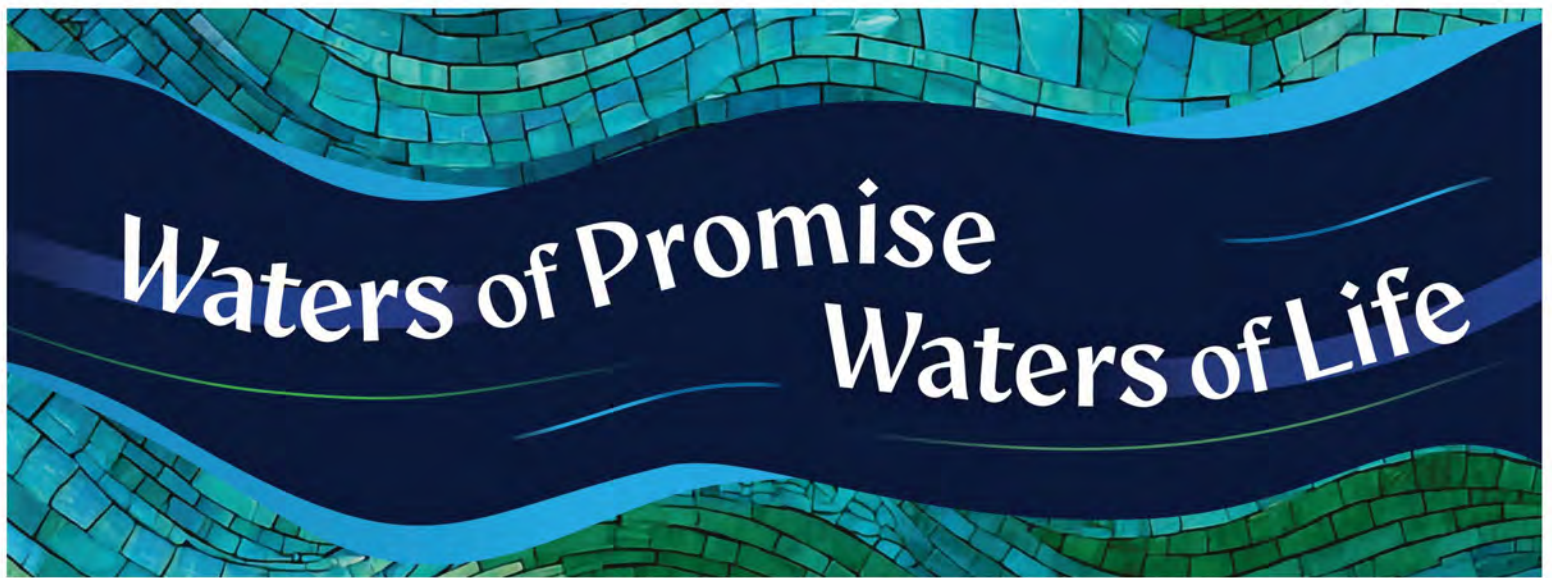
Prairie and Frontier are to the right of the check-in area

Directors and Conference are off the main hallway

Mezzanine I, II and III are located upstairs,

staircase and elevator near the hotel front desk





LITTLE LUTHERANS AT ASSEMBLY

We are happy to welcome children and parents at Synod Assembly by providing the following opportunities.

CHILDCARE

For those who pre-registered, childcare (3 years old and potty-trained - 6th grade) is available on Friday evening, Saturday, and Sunday. The children in childcare will be provided supper on Friday, snacks, and lunch on Saturday. Parents should pick up their child before Worship Services and children are invited and welcome to worship with the assembly. A suggested donation of \$30 per child helps to offset the costs of childcare. You can make a donation at the check-in tables.

ACTIVITY AREA – GREAT HALL

A designated activity area for children under the age of 6 is available in the Great Hall. Parents are responsible for supervision in this area.

NURSING AND PUMPING STATION

A private room is available throughout the weekend for parents to nurse or pump. You will have access to electricity and water. A keycard is available at the check-in registration tables to use whenever it is needed.

Synod Assembly Offering

Holy Innovations Endowment Fund

In our ever-changing world, it is critical that congregations and ministries are inspired to think creatively about how to share God's love and grace in the 21st century.



The Holy Innovations Endowment encourages ministry vitality and inspires congregations and ministries to think boldly and innovatively about being the church in the world today. Grants from this endowment support innovation and experimentation in congregations and ministries.

The Holy Innovations Endowment Fund helps congregations to live out their baptismal calling. You can bring a check or cash to Synod Assembly or give online: www.eandsynod.org/give

You're Invited: Campus Ministry Open House

Crossroads Lutheran Campus Ministry at NDSU
Christus Rex Campus Ministry at UND

Experience a taste of campus ministry and a time to greet EaND Campus Ministry students and leaders. Discover how congregations and leaders can help young adults find belonging, faith, and community during some of the most formative years of life.

Stop by the **Director's Room** (Main Hallway) for snacks, conversation, student stories, and an interactive glimpse into life in campus ministry. This will take place on Friday after Plenary 2.



Eastern North Dakota
Synod, ELCA



Eastern North Dakota Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

2027⁶ COMPENSATION & POLICY GUIDELINES FOR ROSTERED MINISTERS & LAY PAID STAFF

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I. INTRODUCTION

The mission of the Eastern North Dakota Synod is "United in Christ, we dare to invite, connect, and act." These guidelines are provided as a tool for congregations and church staff to use together to ensure that compensation decisions can be made in such a way that God's mission flourishes, staff are cherished as servants of God, and there is a sense of faithful partnership between congregation and staff to ensure all areas of the church's ministry thrive.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS: Ministry settings are diverse – for the sake of this document, the following terms are used:

ROSTERED MINISTER: A person who is on the roster of leaders of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. There are two categories of rostered ministers:

- Minister of Word and Sacrament – Ordained Pastors
- Minister of Word and Service – Ordained Deacons

SYNOD AUTHORIZED MINISTER (SAM): This is for times when a congregation is without a ~~Rostered Minister Minister of Word and Sacrament (pastor)~~ and the Bishop authorizes someone to preside at Holy Communion for a specific time and location. This is often a Synod Lay Minister who has met the additional requirements to serve in synod authorized ministry. This can also be a candidate for ministry. In some situations, this can be for one Sunday or two Sundays. In other cases, a person may enter into a contract for an extended period of time (up to one year with annual renewal possible) to serve a specific congregation or parish.

SYNOD LAY MINISTER: The synod values lay ministry and seeks to equip lay leaders for service within congregations, parishes, and ministries throughout the synod. Synod Lay Ministers have been through a process of discernment, application, and education.

LAY PAID STAFF: All those who are employed by a congregation who are not rostered ministers.

CHURCH STAFF: Refers to ALL paid leaders of the congregation – rostered ministers and lay paid staff.

CONGREGATION: For the sake of this document, the word "congregation" is synonymous with multi-point parish, synod, agency, organization, or specialized ministry.

The primary focus of this document is to provide consistency for rostered ministers serving in our synod. However, we have included tools which may be helpful for addressing compensation of lay paid staff.

HOW DOES THE BIBLE INFLUENCE OUR COMPENSATION DECISIONS?

Decisions about compensation for church staff are best made in light of our core biblical and theological convictions. When approaching this important subject, keep in mind the following faith commitments:

- 1) Our starting point is that the grace of God in Jesus Christ can be neither bought nor sold. God insists on giving it freely. Indeed, all Christians receive in baptism a call to serve and proclaim the Good News of God's undeserved love in Jesus Christ.
- 2) All Christians are to declare the Gospel, especially to those who have never heard it. Within the church, however, some are called to make this task a major occupational commitment. Some members of the church are called to devote their primary time and energy to the ministry of equipping all of God's people for service in the world. When the church calls such persons to dedicate so much of their lives to public ministries that they cannot be employed elsewhere, the church takes upon itself a responsibility to pay those persons appropriate compensation.
- 3) The principle that "laborers deserve their food" (Matthew 10:10) is attested throughout the scriptures. In the Old Testament, priests were granted a portion of the sacrifices made by the people; tithes and other offerings were received to support God's servants. In the New Testament, Paul speaks of the duty of churches to support their leaders, even though Paul chose to waive this right for himself (1 Corinthians 9).
- 4) Insofar as the church is institutionally embodied, it is subject to the same standards of justice to which all human institutions are accountable. The church, however, is more than a human institution. At a deeper level, the church is the community of faith – drawn together by God around the Word and Sacraments, empowered for witness in the world. Rostered ministers and lay paid staff are simultaneously employed by congregations and called by the Church to be fellow workers with all of God's people in the Body of Christ.

As congregations make decisions about compensation, they will bear in mind the identity and calling that are ours in Jesus Christ. The guidelines are designed to assist congregations as they make decisions regarding the compensation of rostered ministers and lay church staff.

MAKING COMPENSATION DECISIONS

Congregations and church staff benefit when a team of members in the congregation understand compensation guidelines and advocate for their use as the budget is being proposed. The tone and quality of conversation surrounding compensation matters may be as important as the outcome of such conversations. Those called to serve the Church are encouraged to focus on the privilege of serving Christ regardless of monetary reward; and congregations are encouraged to be as generous as possible in supporting their paid leaders – each looking out for the good of the other. This only works well if compensation is determined with the mutual interests represented fairly. If your congregation does not have

a team of advocates, church staff is placed in an awkward position of needing to advocate for themselves.

It is recommended each congregation/parish establish a compensation review team. This team should be comprised of 3-5 people appointed by the congregation council who represent all facets of the congregation/parish. The team is charged with the following responsibilities:

- 1) To develop, review, and revise personnel policies for the congregation,
- 2) To ensure regular (annual or semi-annual) evaluation of all members of the staff is occurring,
- 3) To review annual compensation of paid church staff and make recommendations regarding the fair base salary, supplemental benefits, professional expense reimbursements and non-financial compensation for the coming year.

In congregations with multiple paid staff, this team could be considered a personnel committee and be comprised of members with human resource experience.

Compensation packages for all paid staff should be set by the congregation council/elected body that has responsibility and authority to manage the fiscal affairs of the congregation. This should be done in consultation with the paid staff and the compensation review team.

Congregational meetings are too large to be deliberative regarding specific compensation packages. Facts necessary for responsible decisions about compensation are not always available to all members of the congregation. The council should place the recommended compensation package(s) in the budget and present it to the congregation for ratification at the annual meeting.

HOW ARE THESE GUIDELINES DEVELOPED?

Each year, the Synod Council appoints 3-4 people to review this document and provide a recommendation to the Synod Assembly. The review team is asked to:

- 1) Compare our guidelines with neighboring synods' guidelines.
- 2) Seek input (surveys, relevant local considerations, etc).
- 3) Provide recommendations to the bishop and Synod Council for review, input, and ratification.
- 4) Present recommended guidelines to the annual Synod Assembly for discussion, possible amendment, and adoption.

For help with understanding these guidelines, please contact Pr. Brad Skogen, Associate with the Bishop for Congregational Leadership and Transition, at the synod office. Please note, the synod staff cannot provide any legal or tax related advice.

II. COMPENSATION GUIDELINES FOR ROSTERED MINISTERS

TOTAL DEFINED COMPENSATION: Total Defined Compensation is the total of base salary, housing (if applicable), and social security allowance.

For use with Appendix A – Definition of Compensation, Benefits, & Responsibilities (pg. 24-31). Please note, there are three versions of this form:

- Form 1: Word & Sacrament Rostered Minister [with parsonage]
- Form 2: Word & Sacrament Rostered Minister [no parsonage]
- Form 3: Word & Service Rostered Minister

Important note regarding Rostered Couples: It is important for congregations to consider members of a Rostered Couple as separate individuals for compensation and benefits considerations. A Rostered Minister's compensation and benefits considerations should not be impacted by their marital status.

A. BASE SALARY (PART OF TOTAL DEFINED COMPENSATION)

When determining compensation and benefits, the fundamental question should be, "How can we best provide appropriate care for our ministers while recognizing financial compensation is an integral part of that care?" Rostered ministers and congregation leaders need to talk openly, graciously, and productively about their ministry together, including the details of compensation.

2027~~6~~ BASE SALARY CHART

These guidelines provide a minimum salary range. None of these salaries reflect a maximum level. It is recommended that congregations provide a cost-of-living increase annually. Congregations are also encouraged to consider additional merit increases when superior work is recognized. The guidelines shown below reflect a 2.~~85~~5% increase based on projections available in the spring of 202~~6~~5.

Each congregation is unique and offers a variety of challenges and rewards. The chart to the right is provided as a guide based on years of experience. However, additional consideration should be given to the following when calculating base salary:

*Churchwide or synod experience/participation

*Complexity of the call

*Congregation/Parish Ministry Setting

*Ecumenically yoked parish

*Extent of programming

*Member to staff ratio

*Merit

● **Consideration for Prior career experience**

When a minister brings other career experience which enhances a person's gifts for ministry, the value of those experiences should be strongly considered in setting salary. An example would be to calculate the experience prior to ordination at the rate of 1/2 year for each year of experience, up to a maximum of ten years. In this example, a newly ordained minister with ten years of other career enhancing experience should start at the five-year guideline level.

● **Consideration Related to post-graduate education**

Add \$500 - \$1,000+ for each additional earned degree beyond a Master of Divinity.

● **Consideration For multi-point parishes**

If the minister serves two or more congregations or other type of sites, add \$1,500 per additional congregation.

● **Consideration for supervisory responsibilities:**

- Add \$500 for supervision of 1 full time paid staff or equivalent
- Add \$750 for supervision of 2-3 full time paid staff or equivalent
- Add \$1,000 for supervision of 4+ full time paid staff or equivalent

● **Consideration for Large Congregations**

- For congregations over 600 baptized members, add \$1,500.
- Administrative Ministers serving congregations of over 900 baptized members and supervising staff, add \$3,000.

● **Consideration for part-time Rostered Ministers Ministers of Word and Sacrament**

Part-time Rostered Ministers, Ministers of Word and Sacrament will have consideration for salary and benefits corresponding with duties, amount and length of time and service.

Experience (Years)	Ordination Year	2027 Low	2027 High	2027 Average
	2027	44,424	47,633	46,029
1	2026	45,090	48,283	46,687
2	2025	45,732	48,933	47,332
3	2024	46,383	49,582	47,983
4	2023	47,033	50,232	48,633
5	2022	47,683	50,881	49,282
6	2021	48,332	51,532	49,932
7	2020	48,981	52,179	50,580
8	2019	49,631	52,830	51,230
9	2018	50,281	53,480	51,880
10	2017	50,930	54,129	52,530
11	2016	51,581	54,778	53,179
12	2015	52,231	55,428	53,829
13	2014	52,879	56,077	54,478
14	2013	53,529	56,728	55,129
15	2012	54,178	57,378	55,778
16	2011	55,078	58,025	56,552
17	2010	55,477	58,676	57,077
18	2009	56,126	59,326	57,726
19	2008	56,775	59,976	58,375
20	2007	57,426	60,625	59,026
21	2006	58,043	61,386	59,714
22	2005	58,726	61,925	60,325
23	2004	59,373	62,574	60,974
24	2003	59,991	63,224	61,608
25	2002	60,674	63,840	62,257
26	2001	61,321	64,521	62,921
27	2000	61,962	65,171	63,566
28	1999	62,622	65,821	64,221
29	1998	63,271	66,463	64,867
30	1997	63,921	67,119	65,520
31	1996	64,570	67,770	66,170
32	1995	65,219	68,419	66,819
33	1994	65,869	69,068	67,469
34	1993	66,518	69,717	68,117
35	1992	67,167	70,367	68,767
36	1991	67,816	71,016	69,416
37	1990	68,467	71,665	70,066
38	1989	69,117	72,315	70,716
39	1988	69,765	72,964	71,365
40	1987	70,415	73,614	72,014
41+	+650/year			

ANNUAL COMPENSATION REVIEW:

Each year, the compensation review team (refer to page 4 "Making Compensation Decisions" for more details on the goals/make up of this team) will:

- 1) Meet with the rostered minister to complete the "Definition of Compensation, Benefits, & Responsibilities" (see appendix A). This is intended to be a planning and budgeting process, not a review. If this planning process is completed and special emphases are agreed upon for the coming year, the committee will have some basis for review the following year and for merit increases based on achievement of the established goals.
- 2) Present the completed Agreement document to the congregation council for use in their budgeting process and for approval at the congregation's annual meeting.

B. HOUSING (PART OF TOTAL DEFINED COMPENSATION)

An adequate housing allowance or parsonage should be provided for all rostered ministers.

(Ministers of Word and Service should consult a tax advisor about housing allowance income tax questions.)

When a Parsonage IS provided

Please refer to Appendix A, form 1 and Appendix D for assistance.

When a congregation provides a parsonage, the congregation should assume all costs for maintenance, heat and utilities.

- a. **Utilities:** These costs may be paid directly to the provider, or the minister may be provided with a Utilities Allowance sufficient to cover these expenses.
- b. **Upkeep:** The congregation should provide major appliances in the parsonage and provide a regular program of upkeep and maintenance of the property.
- c. **Furnishings Allowance:** Ministers who live in an unfurnished parsonage may also receive a furnishings allowance or have a portion of their salary designated as a furnishings allowance. If the minister receives such an allowance, it must be designated by the congregation council prior to the beginning of the calendar year.

An example motion for furnishings allowance: Upon motion, duly made and seconded, it was voted to designate \$_____ of the total cash salary for (year) to be paid to ~~Rev-~~_____ as furnishings allowance in response to the minister's request and acknowledgement that the allowance so designated will not exceed actual expenses for their home including utilities, upkeep and repairs, insurance, and furnishings. Therefore, the cash salary shall be \$_____ and the furnishings allowance shall be \$_____.

- d. **Housing Equity:** While living in a parsonage has many advantages, it does not allow a minister to build equity. Therefore, congregations are encouraged to help provide for the future housing needs of the minister at such a time when he/she decides to purchase a home by establishing a *Housing Equity Account*. To accomplish this, the congregation does not pay the minister directly but makes additional employer contributions through a housing equity agreement with Portico Benefit Services. It is recommended these contributions be equal, at a minimum, to 3% of Total Defined Annual Compensation. See Appendix A – Form 1 for the formula to determine this benefit. The congregation and rostered minister should enter into a parsonage agreement, see Appendix D for examples.
- e. When a Rostered Couple serves with the same congregation or a multi-point parish: a housing allowance of 15% Defined Compensation shall be provided for each of the spouses and may be directed into a Housing Equity Account through Portico Benefits Services or be received as additional compensation by the Rostered Couple.
- f. When a Rostered Couple serves with neighboring congregations or multi-point parishes: The Rostered Couple shall live in the parsonage of one congregation/parish. The congregation/parish that owns the parsonage in which the Rostered Couple resides should enter into a parsonage agreement with the Rostered minister who serves with them. The other congregation/parish shall provide a housing allowance according to the compensation guidelines for the rostered minister serving with them.
- g. In the event of a pastor's death, the pastor's spouse/family shall be allowed to remain in the parsonage for six months or until the end of the school year (if there are school-age children) whichever is longer, including continued payment and provision of utilities and amenities.

When a Parsonage is NOT provided – Use Appendix A – form 2

h. Housing Allowance:

When a parsonage is not provided, the minister is given a cash housing allowance. This allowance should be enough to cover housing adequate for the minister's family's needs. In the case of a Rostered Couple, each of the spouses shall receive a housing allowance according to the compensation guidelines. Factors to consider in determining the amount of a housing allowance include: rental costs/home purchase prices in the community, utilities, property taxes, homeowner/rental insurance, maintenance, etc. The standard amount is equal to 30% of the base salary.

To meet IRS regulations around clergy housing, the amount designated as housing allowance must be designated by the congregation council, in consultation with the minister, prior to the beginning of **each** calendar year.

The minister assumes full responsibility for compliance with IRS definitions of "cost to provide a home."

Ministers should be aware of the tax issues associated with receiving a cash housing allowance or using a parsonage. It is recommended that rostered ministers seek out a qualified tax adviser who is knowledgeable about the unique tax situations for clergy.

C. SOCIAL SECURITY ALLOWANCE (PART OF TOTAL DEFINED COMPENSATION)

Employers are required to pay FICA (Social Security and Medicare) taxes for all employees. Since the IRS considers ordained Ministers of Word and Sacrament self-employed for FICA purposes, but employed for income tax purposes, congregations cannot legally pay FICA directly for ministers but the FICA amount should be paid directly to a Minister of Word and Sacrament.

The FICA tax rate for self-employed persons is currently 15.3%. Ministers must pay FICA tax on their base salary and housing. Congregations are expected to reimburse ministers one-half of this amount (the equivalent of the employer's share of FICA, currently at 7.65%).

The Social Security Allowance must be considered as salary in reporting income to the IRS, and it is also considered income when computing benefit contributions (healthcare/retirement/etc.).

D. HEALTH INSURANCE, RETIREMENT CONTRIBUTIONS & OTHER BENEFITS

Portico Benefit Services, the nonprofit benefit ministry of the ELCA, provides the benefit program for rostered ministers and their families. Sponsorship will include medical/dental coverage for the deacon's spouse and children unless they have other employee-provided group medical insurance coverage and the deacon consents to waiving medical/dental coverage for them under the ELCA Pension and Other Benefits Program. Congregations are expected to provide health coverage for spouse and family of rostered ministers. Portico provides health, dental, prescription drug, retirement, disability, and group life insurance benefits in one bundled program.* This program is designed to address the needs of rostered ministers and provide seamless benefits during change of call, leave from call, and other events unique to ministry. A bundled approach helps ensure rostered ministers are protected against significant financial loss from a variety of risks. Through Portico, congregations** in this synod and across the country pool their collective purchasing power to provide benefits in a cost-effective manner. For more information, see the ELCA Philosophy of Benefits at [502-228-](#)

[ELCAPhilosophyOfBenefits.pdf](#) [PorticoBenefits.org/philosophy](#).

Congregations and plan members share the cost of benefits. Congregations are expected to support the well-being of their covered plan members by paying all or a significant portion of the contributions for benefits. Plan members are expected to participate in the cost of utilizing the benefits (e.g., deductibles, coinsurance, and copays).

Rostered Couples are advised to be in close contact with a Portico representative to review provisions unique to Rostered Couples. For example: determining which spouse will be considered the primary person for healthcare coverage; how to navigate coverage when congregations offer different plans; navigating open enrollment.

*A plan member may waive health coverage if they have access to valid medical insurance coverage through their spouse or another employer.

***"Congregations" may also refer to multi-point parishes or other non-parish ministry agencies such as Bible camps, long-term care facilities, hospitals, campus ministries, etc.

1. HEALTH INSURANCE

The ELCA Church Council has approved a balance of cost-sharing between congregations and plan members. Portico offers a choice of ELCA-Primary health benefit options that fit this approved balance. Each fall, congregations in this synod should select one of these approved options to offer their sponsored plan members for the following year. During annual enrollment, Portico will notify congregations which options fit within the range that the ELCA Church Council has approved. Congregations should engage in conversation with their rostered minister to determine the option that best fits their needs. Current contribution rates are available on at [EmployerLink/PorticoBenefits.org](#) [EmployerLink.PorticoBenefits.org](#) or by calling Portico at 800.352.2876.

Field Code Changed

If a rostered minister is eligible for coverage under their spouse's insurance plan and waives coverage, the congregation and rostered minister should negotiate additional compensation in another area of the compensation package. It is important to seek professional tax advice when doing this to ensure compliance with federal regulations.

For Rostered Couples, Portico uses a cost-sharing structure for the congregation(s) the couple serves resulting in a lower contribution cost than if the Rostered Ministers were not married. It is important for congregational leaders to determine an equitable and just solution for how to use those cost savings and be prepared for future costs of two rostered ministers who are not married.

2. RETIREMENT CONTRIBUTIONS

It is recommended that the congregation make retirement contributions of at least 10% of Total Defined Compensation.

3. DISABILITY INSURANCE

It is provided as part of the Portico bundle (please note – congregations are responsible for full compensation for the first 60 days during a disability period, until the Portico sponsored Long Term Disability Benefit begins).

4. LIFE INSURANCE Provided as part of the Portico bundle.

5. OPTIONAL WITHHOLDING

Portico also offers the following optional products to those enrolled:

- i. Flexible Spending Account for Health Care/Health Savings Account
- ii. Flexible Spending Account for Dependent Care
- iii. Housing Equity and/or Retirement Contribution

It is the congregation's responsibility to follow all IRS and government regulations regarding healthcare and optional withholding(s). Many regulations have changed in recent years.

If a congregation opts not to utilize Portico Benefit Services, it is expected the same portfolio of products (one through five above) is offered to the rostered minister.

The Portico website offers plan summaries and calculators that can assist with estimating costs.

E. REIMBURSEMENT

It is important to follow all IRS regulations and guidelines related to reimbursement. Each congregation should have a Professional Expense Accountable Reimbursement Policy (see Appendix E). Under this policy, itemized receipts must be submitted to verify date, amount and purpose of the expense to ensure that the request for reimbursement is not considered taxable income.

TRAVEL EXPENSES

Automobile and other work-related travel expenses are business expenses for the congregation and should not be regarded as salary.

When a minister is using his/her own vehicle, the congregation should reimburse the minister with actual mileage at the current IRS guidelines or offer the minister a fixed auto allowance. In both cases, the minister is expected to document mileage for IRS reporting. Miles traveled for commuting are not reimbursable.

In lieu of such a reimbursement, the congregation might lease or purchase a vehicle for the minister's use for congregation business. When this is the case, the congregation assumes the operating costs associated with that vehicle (gas, insurance, maintenance, etc.). When the congregation's vehicle is used for personal business, the value of that use is considered reportable income.

PROFESSIONAL EXPENSES

It is recommended that professional expenses such as books, vestments, periodicals, professional dues, communication (basic cell phone) and costs incurred in the performance of the duties of the ministerial office be shared by the congregation. It is also expected the congregation cover costs associated with the rostered minister participating in official synod events (see Section V: Synod Exceptions and Benefits).

Attendance at text studies, conference ministerial meetings, conference gatherings and other synod events is encouraged.

F. CONTINUING EDUCATION

The Lutheran Church has a history of an educated and well-trained staff. Rostered ministers are expected to complete continuing education each year. The congregation should expect their rostered ministers to be involved in continuing education programs which will provide opportunity for personal development, enrichment of devotional life, and growth in effectiveness and competency. Continuing education should be regarded as an essential ongoing process which assists in maintaining and sharpening the professional skills required in a rapidly changing world. Congregations should give consideration to a continuing education record when granting salary increases and when in the call process.

Continuing education is understood to be "professional growth" and "self-renewal" as distinguished from program development, vacation, or synod sponsored learning events. Both the minister and the congregation benefit from involvement in continuing education. It is therefore suggested the continuing education program be mutually studied and agreed upon. The minister should present a plan to the congregation council for consideration and approval prior to the start of a course of study as well as provide a recap at the conclusion of the program. Continuing education may include courses, seminary classes, workshops, or independent study, when directed toward a goal.

Funding for continuing education for a full-time rostered minister shall be provided by the congregation at a minimum of **\$1000** per year. Continuing education funds may be accumulated up to a total of three years.

It is also recommended a minimum of two weeks and two Sundays of continuing education time be granted for rostered ministers. Continuing education time may be accumulated at a rate of two weeks per year, up to a total of three years. Termination of employment cancels all time and money banked and is not paid out at the end of the call. A Rostered Couple serving in the same setting may use their continuing education time at the same time as each other.

First Call Rostered Ministers

Ministers ordained in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America are required to participate in First Call Theological Education (FCTE) for their first three years in ministry. Congregations committing to call a First Call rostered minister should grant for additional mileage, time, as well as funding of approximately \$250 for FCTE meetings and annual events.

G. WORKERS COMPENSATION COVERAGE

Employers are required by law to provide North Dakota Work Force Safety and Insurance (WSI) to employees. Employers are not required to provide WSI coverage to independent contractors. However, congregations are strongly recommended to provide WSI coverage to rostered ministers, because such ministers may be considered "employees" for purposes of WSI and because it is prudent to avoid the risk of liability in the event of an injury or death arising from the performance of duties. For more information about workers compensation coverage in North Dakota, visit www.workforcesafety.com.

H. LIABILITY INSURANCE

It is recommended all congregations carry a general "umbrella" insurance plan which covers all the types of liability (including personal injury and professional liability) a congregation may encounter.

III. OTHER BENEFITS FOR ROSTERED MINISTERS

A. VACATION TIME

It is recommended vacation time be 5 weeks (25 working days, including five Sundays) for all rostered ministers regardless of years of experience.

Legally paid holidays (see §Section H below: Paid Holidays & Work Week) are not considered vacation days. When the rostered minister's services are required on recognized holidays, time off with pay may be taken at a more convenient time.

Vacation time is offered purely for the rest, relaxation, and renewal of ministers. Vacation time is in addition to attendance at synod/churchwide assemblies, conferences, and continuing education. Special circumstances may require the rostered minister and congregation council to negotiate the carryover of unused vacation time into the following year. A Rostered Minister

who leaves a call during the year is to be paid for unused vacation time in a proportionate amount of time served for the year. For example, if the Rostered Minister leaves at the end of the third month in the fiscal year, the Rostered Minister is to be paid for unused vacation time of ¼ of the total vacation time for the whole year.

A Rostered Couple serving in the same setting may use their vacation at the same time.

B. SICK LEAVE

Reasonable time away from work due to personal illness may be provided to staff without recording it as vacation. It is a common practice to give one sick day per month. These are usually carried over and accrued up to a maximum of 60-90 working days. A Rostered Couple may need to use sick leave at the same time. For extended illnesses, ministers should discuss their needs with congregation leadership and reach a mutual understanding. Policies should be clear whether or not unused sick leave is to be paid at the end of employment.

C. BEREAVEMENT/FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE

In the event of a death in his/her immediate family (to include spouse, children, parent, brother, sister, grandparents, grandchildren, mother-in-law, father-in-law or legal guardian) rostered ministers should be allowed at least five days and one Sunday with pay to attend the funeral and to tend to family affairs. In cases of sudden death or extensive travel, additional time shall be considered.

When there is a serious illness with an immediate family member (defined above), the rostered minister should be in conversation with the congregation leadership and reach a mutual understanding. Congregations should allow ministers to use their accrued sick leave for this care, prior to utilizing vacation time.

A Rostered Couple may use Bereavement/Family Medical leave at the same time.

D. FAMILY LEAVE

It is expected that Family Leave is provided with full salary, housing and benefits for eight (8) weeks following the birth of a child or adoption of a child. A Rostered Couple may be granted family leave at the same time or consecutively for the birth or adoption of children.

An explanation of the family leave policy:

- A minimum of eight (8) weeks is expected as paid family leave for *all* rostered ministers and lay paid staff to provide care for a newborn child or newly adopted child. (NOTE: [Multiple studies](#) reveal that, for most infants, 12 weeks under the daily care of their parent(s) before entering day care provides increased health and well-being outcomes for both the child and the family.)
- What is paid family leave? Family leave is paid time off with full salary and benefits for the care of a newborn or newly adopted child. It is distinct from other leave such as sick leave, vacation time, and continuing education. During family leave, the rostered minister or lay paid staff is released from all work-related responsibilities and tasks. Other provisions for all pastoral/congregational care and other work-related contingencies should be planned to serve the congregation/organization during the time of leave.

- The council President should contact synod staff if they need consultation as soon as family leave is requested.

In a recent survey, Rostered Ministers in this synod and across the church report that their congregations have a lack of understanding of what is meant by family leave. They have often been expected to return from leave to respond to what some in the congregation regard urgent pastoral needs in the congregation. This could be avoided with a clear understanding of the purpose and importance of leave along with a plan for covering pastoral emergencies as they arise during the leave.

E. DISABILITY LEAVE

In case of temporary disability due to accident, illness, surgery, etc., it is expected the congregation will continue to pay full salary, housing and benefits (see Appendix A) until disability benefits of the Portico plan commence. Any period of disability (start date, length, and return to active duty) should be based on a physician's recommendation. Anyone covered under Portico sponsored benefits must not work for two (2) months before disability coverage can begin, so it is essential that congregations are prepared to continue salary and benefits during this period.

F. SABBATICAL LEAVE

It is recommended that Rostered Ministers be granted a 1-3 month sabbatical leave for every 5-7 years in the current call. Sabbatical leave is paid leave, recognizing the rostered ministers' need for spiritual renewal and extended study to continue furthering the congregation's mission. A Rostered Couple may plan sabbatical leave at the same time. For more information, please refer to Appendix C.

G. MILITARY LEAVE

A congregation whose minister serves simultaneously in the military should grant leave time for the minister to fulfill his/her military obligations. Such military leave time is to be granted exclusive of vacation and continuing education time.

It is recommended that each congregation develop written policies relating to compensation issues for ministers while on military leave. Policy guidelines are available from the ELCA

Federal Chaplaincy website <http://www.elca.org/Resources/Federal-Chaplains-our-work/leadership/federal-chaplaincy-ministries/bureau-for-federal-chaplaincy>

H. PAID HOLIDAYS & WORK WEEK

At least one full day and preferably two days free of congregation responsibilities should be provided each week. Paid holidays include New Year's Day, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Easter Monday, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day. When holidays or days off are missed, these should be taken at another time. A Rostered Couple may take days off and paid holidays at the same time.

I. MOVING EXPENSES & TRANSITION TIME

Good beginnings are important. It is helpful that the relationship between a rostered minister and congregation "get off on the right foot." The congregation and rostered minister are

urged to give thoughtful consideration to the needs of the other when undertaking a move. Because moving can be both exciting and stressful, the congregation and rostered minister will want to reach a mutually satisfactory decision about the move as part of compensation negotiations.

When making such decisions, the following guidelines should be kept in mind:

- The congregation issuing the call is normally responsible for the cost of professionally moving all household, professional, and personal goods of the rostered minister and his/her family.
- A rostered minister moving from one call to another should be offered one week (including a Sunday) of transition time. This time should be paid by the calling congregation and no official duties should be expected.

IV. IN THE ABSENCE OF A MINISTER

A. PULPIT SUPPLY & OTHER SUPPLY SERVICES

The cost of pulpit supply in the minister's absence is borne by the congregation. Arrangement for pulpit supply is the responsibility of the congregation or parish council and is typically arranged by the President. In addition to mileage at the standard IRS mileage rate, the following remuneration is recommended per Sunday: one service - \$175, plus \$50 for each additional service on the same day. Other supply services, like teaching confirmation, hospital visitation, etc., can be mutually agreed upon within a suggested range of \$25-\$40/hour, based on the experience, qualifications required and complexity of the needed supply service.

B. INTERIM & CONTRACTED MINISTERS

When transition occurs in the ministerial office, it is often wise to provide for an interim period to give time to deal with the emotions of transition and to define the needs and goals of the congregation before calling another minister. The following guidelines pertain to this interim ministerial ministry:

1. The interim minister is appointed by the Synod Bishop with the consultation of the congregation council. The terms of the contract are determined by the particular needs of the congregation. The synod office will provide sample contracts for this purpose.
2. Normally as a starting point, the interim minister is compensated at the level of the previous minister or their own current level of experience, whichever is higher.

The contract between the interim minister and the congregation(s) could include:

1. **Full-time Interim**

- a. Congregation provides furnished housing or housing allowance for minister, spouse and family.
 - b. Interim ministers serving a congregation between permanent ministers should be compensated as agreed upon by the minister and all congregation councils involved.
2. **Part-time interim (3/5, 1/2, 2/5, etc.)** Remuneration: Proportionate to amount paid a full-time interim minister.
 3. **Sunday worship supply** See pulpit supply compensation above.
 4. **Other services; i.e., weddings, funerals, etc.** \$ 175 per service plus mileage at IRS guidelines, paid by the congregation. This is in addition to any honorarium paid by the family/funeral home.

C. SYNOD LAY MINISTER/SYNOD AUTHORIZED MINISTER

In some situations, a Synod Lay Minister or candidate for ministry may provide leadership in the absence of a regularly called rostered minister. The Bishop may authorize someone to preside at Holy Communion during this time (reference glossary for more information). See Section VI for information about compensation of lay paid staff, in addition to pulpit supply guidelines.

V. SYNOD EXPECTATIONS & BENEFITS

The Greek translation of the word synod is "journeying together." In the Eastern North Dakota Synod, maintaining a culture of collegiality and partnership is of the utmost importance.

A. OFFICIAL SYNOD EVENTS

Rostered Ministers under call in this synod are expected to participate in the following official synod events:

- Synod Assembly (usually first weekend in June)
- Fall Theological Conference (week after Labor Day)
- Boundaries Training (every three years)
- Anti-Racism Training (every three years)
- First Call Theological Education (for Rostered Ministers serving in their first three years of ordained ministry)

Attending these events is part of working in a collegial relationship with other ministers and sharing mutual accountability with one another.

B. REPORT TO THE BISHOP

Rostered Ministers under call are expected to complete a Report to the Bishop each year.

C. MINISTERIAL ETHICS (related to congregations previously served)

When a minister accepts a call to a congregation, a sacred covenant is established between that minister and the people of God in that place. In order for the ministry to be strong and effective, it is important for that relationship to be strengthened and nurtured until God calls that minister to another sector of ministry. When a minister resigns a call, that covenant ends. How does a minister relate appropriately to members of congregations where one has previously served? The following guidelines help ensure good choices are made which do not negatively impact the ministry of the people of God. Violation of the below guidelines will make a rostered minister subject to discipline.

1. It is the responsibility of a former minister to decline invitations to conduct ministerial acts in any congregation where he/she has formerly served. It is important the former minister does not pass the burden of such decisions back to the minister who currently holds that call. As professional people, ministers commit themselves to act responsibly in these matters. For the sake of the congregation and the ongoing ministry of the congregation, "Do to others as you would have them do to you." When ministers do this, relating to members of previous congregations can be used by God to build up the body of Christ. (EaND Synod Constitution, S14.14 - *Ordained ministers shall respect the integrity of the ministry of congregations which they do not serve and shall not exercise ministerial functions therein unless invited to do so by the minister, or if there is no duly called minister, then by the interim minister in consultation with the Congregation Council.*)
2. It is the responsibility of a former minister to be supportive of his/her successor, even when it is difficult to do. The responsibility for the success of the current minister is also the former minister's responsibility. If it is not possible for the former minister to be supportive of the new minister's ministry, it is extremely important he/she cuts off contact with members of that congregation in order not to become a hindrance to its ministry. It is especially important to apply these guidelines to digital and social media posts, communication, and activity.
3. While the above statements are addressed to ministers, spouses of ministers must consider the same factors, and respect the recommendations made above. Spouses share a ministerial identity and, as a result, can violate boundaries as significantly by proxy as a minister can.
4. It is normally the former minister's responsibility to change his/her congregation membership and to worship at a new congregation when possible.

D. SYNOD ENDOWMENT GRANTS

In 2000, an Endowment Fund was started in Eastern North Dakota Synod to encourage, support and enhances quality ministerial leadership. The Endowment Fund offers the following grants to

ministers serving within the synod including Seminary Debt Repayment Grants and Pension Equity Grants.

Any Rostered Minister who is under call and meets annual synod expectations is eligible to apply. Visit the synod website www.eandsynod.org for more information on the grant application process.

VI. COMPENSATION FOR LAY PAID STAFF

A. BASIC PRINCIPLES

Lay paid staff should receive compensation similar to comparable professionals in the community. Salaries should also be commensurate with experience and expectations placed upon them.

When hired, the personnel committee or congregation council, in consultation with the person hired, should outline the position description/expectations and compensation for the position in a letter of employment or another suitable document.

Each year an annual review should be scheduled with each lay staff member and their supervisor to discuss the direction, continuing education, goals, and compensation.

B. COMPENSATION

Congregations must conform to applicable federal and state laws regarding the compensation of non-ministerial employees. Accordingly, the congregation's personnel policies must provide for appropriate tax withholding, payment of the employer's share of FICA (Social Security and Medicare) taxes, provision of WSI (Workforce Safety & Insurance) workers compensation insurance and, adherence to applicable minimum wage laws and fair employment practices, etc.

Compensation for non-ministerial church workers who provide necessary support services for ministry, such as secretaries, custodians, treasurers, financial secretaries, etc. will vary, depending upon the duties and expectations of each employee, and the qualifications required for each position. Recognizing the importance of such staff to the ministry of the congregation, we recommend the following guidelines:

- Helpful salary guidelines for areas in North Dakota are available online using salary search tools. Calling other congregations or businesses in your area to ask about salaries for particular jobs may also be helpful.
- The Association of Lutheran Church Musicians www.alcm.org provides guidelines and worksheets for compensation for musicians, especially those with specific training in church

music (BA, Masters, advanced degrees). It also provides guidelines for estimating the number of hours expected to conduct choirs or other ensembles in addition to preparing and playing for worship services. Positions can be posted on this site as well.

- The ELCA Network for Children Youth and Family Ministry www.elcaymnet.org conducts an annual salary survey and can be contacted for assistance in posting positions and for providing information about comparable salary information for our region.
- The ~~Lutheran Faith Community—Evangelical Lutheran Parish~~ Nurse Association [https://lutheranfncna.org/National-Information-~~www.elpna.org~~](https://lutheranfncna.org/National-Information-www.elpna.org) is a resource for congregations that employ or are considering employing a parish nurse.
- People serving in part-time exempt positions and who are paid on a salary basis should receive pro-rated salary and benefits.
- Congregations are cautioned to take care in classifying employees as exempt or non-exempt employees and to follow the legal requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act in such matters.

Other factors to take into consideration when determining salary include:

- **Years of Experience**
Additional compensation should be considered for a person with past support staff experience.
- **Education**
Additional compensation should be considered for each degree or certification germane to the present position.
- **Merit**
Merit is difficult to assess but is an important consideration in assessing compensation. Such factors as thoroughness, organization, attention to detail, cordiality, and promptness can be included.

C. BENEFITS

Portico Benefit Services states laypersons working at least 20 hours per week for at least six months per year are eligible to participate in the ELCA pension and other benefits plans. Under the ELCA benefits program, coverage is available for health, retirement, disability and survivor benefits. Information about the ELCA pension programs is available at <https://porticobenefits.org> or by calling 800-352-2876. The benefit programs Portico makes available to lay paid staff are assessed periodically. It is worth checking annually to see if new programs are available that may benefit the congregation and/or employees.

Some congregations prefer to provide other benefit options to lay paid staff. Such benefits should be described in the congregation's personnel policies and should be offered to all

eligible lay paid staff.

It is the congregation's responsibility to be in compliance with all IRS and government regulations regarding healthcare and optional withholding(s). Many regulations have changed in recent years. When in doubt, seek professional guidance.

D. REIMBURSEMENT

TRAVEL

If a non-rostered church worker is expected to travel on behalf of the congregation and its ministries, he/she should be reimbursed according to appropriate IRS regulations.

PROFESSIONAL EXPENSE

If the congregation expects a non-rostered church worker to occasionally pay for ministry-related expenses which are the financial responsibility of the congregation, these expenses should be reimbursed according to the same guidelines listed for rostered ministers in Section II.

EF. Reimbursement.

For some lay paid staff, it is essential to have a cell phone to contact participants and parents in the course of their work. Congregations and non-rostered staff should negotiate a monthly stipend for a cell phone for ministry-related work. When a cell phone is used for both congregation business and personal calls, it is suggested that the congregation and staff member each pay 50% of the base plan.

E. CONTINUING EDUCATION

A continuing education plan is the study program by which non-rostered church employees may develop their present knowledge, acquire new skills, and experience growth for more effective service. Continuing education activity should relate to the employee's job responsibilities. It is recommended the full-time employees be eligible for up to 10 working days of continuing education time each year funded at a minimum of \$450 per year. Continuing education plans should be discussed with and approved by the supervisor in accordance with established congregational policies.

F. PAID TIME OFF

The congregation should distribute to church workers, written policies about vacation days, sick leave, holidays, emergency/funeral leave, disability leave, parental leave, and personal days.

G. UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION

Churches and religious organizations are not liable for Federal and State unemployment taxes.

H. WORKERS COMPENSATION COVERAGE

All employers are required by law to provide Workers' Compensation coverage for their employees. In North Dakota, coverage is provided through North Dakota Workforce Safety and Insurance (WSI). For purposes of Workers' Compensation, pastors/ministers are likely employees and therefore should be covered. For more information about workers compensation coverage in North Dakota, visit www.workforcesafety.com.

VII. APPENDICES & WORKSHEETS

Appendix A: Definition of Compensation, Benefits, & Responsibilities~~Annual Defined Compensation Agreement~~

- Form 1: Word & Sacrament Rostered Minister [with parsonage]
- Form 2: Word & Sacrament Rostered Minister [no parsonage]
- Form 3: Word & Service Rostered Minister

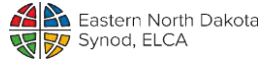
Appendix B: Annual Compensation Review Process for Rostered Ministers..... 28

Appendix C: Sabbatical Resources..... 29

Appendix D: Parsonage Guidelines and ~~Agreements~~... 31

Appendix E: Professional Expense Accountable Reimbursement Policy... 35

Appendix A – form 1



Definition of Compensation, Benefits, & Responsibilities – Word & Sacrament Rostered Minister [with parsonage]

Prepared by (congregation name) _____

for the Reverend _____

on a full- or _____ - time basis for the period of _____ to _____.

A. COMPENSATION

- 1) Base Salary \$ _____
(See page 7 for the minimum salary amount for the appropriate years of service. Also consider pertinent Additional Considerations Box recommended amounts.)
2) Social Security Matching for Base Salary [Base Salary x .0765] \$ _____
(Because pastors are considered self-employed by the IRS for social security computations only and must pay this amount on all salary and allowances and on the parsonage valuation, the synod council recommends that congregations/parishes/Synod contribute a minimum of 1/2 of the total self-employment social security tax.)
3) Parsonage Valuation [(Base Salary + S.S. Matching from line 2) x .30] \$ _____
(Not cash compensation. For Portico benefits and IRS purposes only)
4) Utilities Allowance (only when paid directly to the pastor) \$ _____
5) Furnishings Allowance (only when paid directly to the pastor) \$ _____
6) Defined Compensation [Total of lines 1-5] \$ _____
(NOTE: Line 3 is for valuation purposes only for Portico, lines 1, 2, 4, and 5 figure into the Minister's actual paycheck.)

B. PENSION & OTHER BENEFITS

Step by step procedure:

Please note that the Portico Benefit Calculators are no longer accessible without a User Name and Password. Most Congregation Treasurers and current plan members should already have User Names and Passwords. Also, you will need to know the Health Benefit Option chosen by your congregation council or sponsoring Organization before proceeding.

- a) Go online to: https://porticobenefits.org
b) Click on the "myPortico" button for an individual plan member or the "Employer Link" button for a Sponsoring organization.
c) Enter User Name and Password in the proper boxes. Then click the "Sign In" button.
d) Click on "Overview & Life Changes."
e) Under "Understanding Your Benefits," click on the "Calculating the Cost of Benefits" line.
f) Under "Plan Member Benefit Cost," click on the "Benefits Costs Calculator" button.
g) On this page, you will need to select the proper plan year, select the proper Health Benefit Option (chosen by your congregation council or your sponsoring organization), select "Eastern North Dakota Synod-3B" in the "Synod, Seminary, or Churchwide Ministry" box, then click on the Continue button.

Appendix A – form 1, cont.



**Definition of Compensation, Benefits,
& Responsibilities – Word & Sacrament Rostered Minister [with parsonage]**

- h) On this page, you will need to enter the Total Defined Compensation (line 6 of the worksheet).
- i) Next, in the “Plan Member Health Coverage” box, you will need to select between “ELCA primary,” “ELCA Medicare Primary,” and “Waive Health Benefits,” then enter the plan member(s) birthdate.
- j) Next, under “Spouse Health Coverage” and “Children Health Coverage,” you will need to select Between these four options under each: None, ELCA-Primary, ELCA Medicare-Primary and Waive.
- k) Under “Special Circumstances,” you will need to answer “yes” or “no” to two questions.
- l) Under Retirement Contributions, enter Employer Retirement Contribution Percentage. In most Cases, unless otherwise negotiated, this would be 10%. Some long-serving pastors from ELCA predecessor churches are to be compensated at 12%.
- m) Under “Housing Equity Retirement Contribution,” you will need to select between three options: None, Flat Rate, and Percentage of Total Defined Compensation. If the plan member is receiving a housing allowance, in the vast majority of cases, “None” would be the proper selection. If the plan member is to live in housing (a parsonage) provided by the congregation or sponsoring organization, then the latter two options are in play. If you select “Flat Rate,” you will need to enter a dollar figure per month. If you select the “Percentage” option, you will need to enter the proper percentage. [See the Housing Equity section of the guidelines for the recommended percentage.] Click the “Continue” button.
- n) On the next page, you can review the Input Summary by clicking on the small blue downward arrow on the right side of the page.
- o) By clicking on the small blue downward arrow on the right side of the page corresponding to the Health Benefit Option, you will get the calculated numbers of the benefit costs per month and per year.

Carry Total From Line 6 (Defined Compensation) to Here	→	\$ _____
7) ELCA Medical, Dental & Pension Plan (enter “Total Benefits Contribution”)		\$ _____
8) Housing Equity Allowance [0-15 years of experience: Defined Compensation x .045; 15+ years of experience: Defined Compensation x .06] (See page 9. The Synod Council recommends that this be A minimum of 3% of the Defined Compensation)		\$ _____
9) Additional Benefits		\$ _____
10) Compensation, Pension & Other Benefits Benefits Total [Add Lines 6-9, subtract 3]		\$ _____

Appendix A – form 1, cont.



Definition of Compensation, Benefits, & Responsibilities – Word & Sacrament Rostered Minister [with parsonage]

C. EXPENSES

- 11) Transportation Milage/Travel Expense Reimbursement (See page 12 of Synod Guidelines) \$ _____
- 12) Professional Expense Reimbursements (See pages 12 of Synod Guidelines) \$ _____
- 13) Official Synod Events (Includes Synod Assembly, Synod Assembly, Synod Theological Day, Theology for Ministry Conference, and First Call Theological Education Core Events) \$ _____
- 14) Continuing Education (Minimum \$1000) \$ _____
- 15) Other \$ _____

Total Compensation, Pension & Benefits, and Expenses [Add Lines 10-15] \$ _____

D. NONFINANCIAL COMPENSATION

- Vacation _____ weeks, including _____ Sundays
- Continuing Education _____ weeks, including _____ Sundays
- New Parent Leave _____ weeks, including _____ Sundays
- Short Term Disability 60 Days

We, the undersigned, certify that the necessary approvals of the congregation and congregation council have been granted for the provisions set forth above.

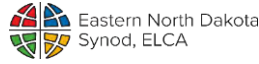
Date: _____ Congregation President

I certify that I accept the above statement: _____ Council Secretary

The Reverend _____ Date: _____

Note: Retain originals in a record for the congregation/parish. Make a copy for the pastor. Send a copy to the synod office. A description of the particular responsibilities of this position may be attached to this document.

Appendix A – form 2



**Definition of Compensation, Benefits,
& Responsibilities – Word & Sacrament Rostered Minister [no parsonage]**

Prepared by (congregation name) _____

for the Reverend _____

on a full- or _____ - time basis for the period of _____ to _____.

A. COMPENSATION

- 1) Base Salary \$ _____
(See page 7 for the minimum salary amount for the appropriate year of service. Also consider pertinent Additional Considerations Box recommended amounts.)
- 2) Housing Allowance \$ _____
[Line 1 (base salary x .30)]
- 3) Subtotal of line 1 & 2 \$ _____
- 4) Social Security Reimbursement on subtotal x .0765] \$ _____
[Base Salary and Housing Allowance]
(Because pastors are considered self-employed by the IRS for social security computations only and must pay this amount on all salary and allowances. They synod council recommends that congregations/parishes/Synod contribute a minimum of ½ of the total self-employment social security tax.)
- 5) **Defined Compensation** [Total of lines 3 and 4] \$ _____

B. PENSION & OTHER BENEFITS

Step by step procedure:

Please note that the Portico Benefit Calculators are no longer accessible without a User Name and Password. Most Congregation Treasurers and current plan members should already have User Names and Passwords. Also, you will need to know the Health Benefit Option chosen by your congregation council or sponsoring Organization before proceeding.

- a) Go online to: <https://porticobenefits.org>
- b) Click on the “myPortico” button for an individual plan member or the “Employer Link” button for a Sponsoring organization.
- c) Enter User Name and Password in the proper boxes. Then click the “Sign In” button.
- d) Click on “Overview & Life Changes.”
- e) Under “Understanding Your Benefits,” click on the “Calculating the Cost of Benefits” line.
- f) Under “Plan Member Benefit Cost,” click on the “Benefits Costs Calculator” button.
- g) On this page, you will need to select the proper plan year, select the proper Health Benefit Option (chosen by your congregation council or your sponsoring organization), select “Eastern North Dakota Synod-3B” in the “Synod, Seminary, or Churchwide Ministry” box, then click on the Continue button.

Appendix A – form 2, cont.



**Definition of Compensation, Benefits,
& Responsibilities – Word & Sacrament Rostered Minister [no parsonage]**

- h) On this page, you will need to enter the Total Defined Compensation (line 6 of the worksheet).
- i) Next, in the “Plan Member Health Coverage” box, you will need to select between “ELCA primary,” “ELCA Medicare Primary,” and “Waive Health Benefits,” then enter the plan member(s) birthdate.
- j) Next, under “Spouse Health Coverage” and “Children Health Coverage,” you will need to select Between these four options under each: None, ELCA-Primary, ELCA Medicare-Primary and Waive.
- k) Under “Special Circumstances,” you will need to answer “yes” or “no” to two questions.
- l) Under Retirement Contributions, enter Employer Retirement Contribution Percentage. In most Cases, unless otherwise negotiated, this would be 10%. Some long-serving pastors from ELCA predecessor churches are to be compensated at 12%.
- m) Under “Housing Equity Retirement Contribution,” you will need to select between three options: None, Flat Rate, and Percentage of Total Defined Compensation. If the plan member is receiving a housing allowance, in the vast majority of cases, “None” would be the proper selection. If the plan member is to live in housing (a parsonage) provided by the congregation or sponsoring organization, then the latter two options are in play. If you select “Flat Rate,” you will need to enter a dollar figure per month. If you select the “Percentage” option, you will need to enter the proper percentage. [See the Housing Equity section of the guidelines for the recommended percentage.] Click the “Continue” button.
- n) On the next page, you can review the Input Summary by clicking on the small blue downward arrow on the right side of the page.
- o) By clicking on the small blue downward arrow on the right side of the page corresponding to the Health Benefit Option, you will get the calculated numbers of the benefit costs per month and per year.

Carry Total From Line 5 (Defined Compensation) to Here	→	\$ _____
6) ELCA Medical, Dental & Pension Plan (enter “Total Benefits Contribution”)		\$ _____
7) Additional Benefits		\$ _____
8) Compensation, Pension & Other Benefits Benefits Total [Add Lines 5-7]		\$ _____

C. EXPENSES

- 9) Transportation Milage/Travel Expense Reimbursement (See page 12 of Synod Guidelines) \$ _____
- 10) Professional Expense Reimbursements (cellphone, vestments, etc) (See page 12 of Synod Guidelines) \$ _____

Appendix A – form 2, cont.



Definition of Compensation, Benefits, & Responsibilities – Word & Sacrament Rostered Minister [no parsonage]

11) Official Synod Events \$ _____
(Includes Synod Assembly, Synod Assembly, Synod Theological Day, Theology for Ministry Conference, and First Call Theological Education Core Events)

12) Continuing Education (Minimum \$1000) \$ _____

Total Compensation, Pension & Benefits, and Expenses \$ _____
[Add Lines 9-12]

D. NONFINANCIAL COMPENSATION

- Vacation _____ weeks, including _____ Sundays
Continuing Education _____ weeks, including _____ Sundays
New Parent Leave _____ weeks, including _____ Sundays
Short Term Disability 60 Days

We, the undersigned, certify that the necessary approvals of the congregation and congregation council have been granted for the provisions set forth above.

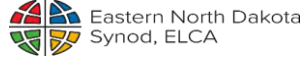
Date: _____ Congregation President

I certify that I accept the above statement: _____ Council Secretary

The Reverend _____ Date: _____

Note: Retain originals in a record for the congregation/parish. Make a copy for the pastor. Send a copy to the synod office. A description of the particular responsibilities of this position may be attached to this document.

APPENDIX A – form 3



Definition of Compensation, Benefits, & Responsibilities -- Word & Service Rostered Minister

Prepared by (congregation name) _____
 for (Deacon's name) _____
 on a full- or _____-time basis for the period of _____ to _____.

A. COMPENSATION

The congregation will provide the following annual compensation:

- 1. **Annual Base Salary** \$ _____
- 2. **Housing Allowance** \$ _____
**A member of the Word & Service Roster should consult with a tax advisor regarding housing allowance questions*
- 3. **Annual Defined Compensation** (total of lines 1 + 2; amount used by Portico & IRS) \$ _____

B. PENSION AND OTHER BENEFITS

The congregation will sponsor the deacon in the Pension and Other Benefits Program of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (Portico), which provides retirement, disability, survivor, and medical/dental coverage. (Sponsorship will include medical/dental coverage for the deacon's spouse and children unless they have other employer-provided group medical insurance coverage and the deacon consents to waiving medical/dental coverage for them under the ELCA Pension and Other Benefits Program.)

- 1. ELCA Pension at _____% of defined compensation (10, 11 or 12%) \$ _____
- 2. ELCA Medical-and-Dental Insurance (please check one):
 - Member only \$ _____
 - Member and spouse \$ _____
 - Member and children \$ _____
 - Member, spouse, and children \$ _____
 - Coverage waived (if coverage is waived, a Healthcare Allowance should be negotiated)
- 3. Other insurance or benefits:
 - _____ \$ _____
 - _____ \$ _____

C. EXPENSES

The congregation will provide payment or reimbursement for the following expenses related to the ministry:

- 1. Automobile and travel allowance \$ _____
- 2. Other professional expenses (cell phone) \$ _____
- 3. Expenses for official meetings of the synod (registration/lodging/mileage) \$ _____
(e.g. Synod Assembly, Fall Theological Conference – recommended at \$500-\$1000)
- 4. Continuing Education (\$1,000 recommended; minimum \$700 from congregation) \$ _____
- 5. Other _____ \$ _____
(e.g. First Call Theological Education (\$300-\$500), etc.)
- 6. Pay moving expenses to this congregation/parish: \$ _____

D. AGREEMENT

- 1. Vacation time of _____ per year, including _____ Sundays;
(Guideline: five (5) weeks (25 days), including five (5) Sundays)
- 2. Continuing education time of _____ weeks per year
(Recommended: minimum of two (2) weeks/year, including two (2) Sundays, may be accumulated up to three years, as reflected in a continuing-education agreement developed by the Deacon and congregation council);

APPENDIX A – form 3, cont.



Definition of Compensation, Benefits, & Responsibilities -- Word & Service Rostered Minister

- 3. Participation in a First-Call Theological Education Program, where applicable;
4. Ongoing care through a Mutual Ministry Committee;
5. Up to two months of continued salary, housing, and contributions to the ELCA Pension and Other Benefits Program (Portico) in a 12-month period in the event that the deacon is physically or mentally disabled (Provision may be made for further unpaid time for disability recovery as agreed by the congregation, but with the stipulation that unused accumulated sick leave will not be compensated at the end of this call.); and
6. Where applicable, parental leave up to eight (8) weeks with full salary and benefits.

A description of the particular responsibilities of this position may be attached to this "Definition of Compensation, Benefits, and Responsibilities" form OR the following may be completed.

E. OTHER PROVISIONS

Special emphases of the deacon and special encouragement by the congregation:

- 1. During this time period, the deacon will give special attention in ministry to the following: (a) (b) (c) (d)
2. The congregation will encourage this deacon's ministry in the following ways: (a) (b) (c) (d)

F. OTHER MATTERS

(Ex: accountability matters, service on synodical or churchwide boards and committees, work in church-camp programs, and other such details)

Blank lines for entering other matters.

We, the undersigned, certify that the necessary approvals of the congregation and congregation council have been granted for the provisions set forth above.

Date: _____ Congregation President

_____ Council Secretary

I certify that I accept the above statement:

Deacon's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Note: Retain originals in a record for the congregation/parish. Make a copy for the deacon. Send a copy to the synod office. A description of the particular responsibilities of this position may be attached to this document.

APPENDIX B: ANNUAL MINSITRY REVIEW PROCESS FOR ROSTERED MINISTERS

The minister and congregation council or designated sub-committee should meet annually to discuss mutual goals and the "Annual Defined Compensation Agreement." (Appendix A).

A helpful starting place is to utilize the "mutual expectations" articulated in the Ministry Site Profile during the call process for the first review discussion after the 1-year anniversary of the minister starting ministry in the congregation. A similar set of mutual expectations could be developed and identified for each subsequent year and reviewed annually thereafter.



APPENDIX C: SABBATICAL RESOURCES

Biblical Understanding

The term sabbatical has its roots in the Old Testament concept of Sabbath, or rest, after seven days or years. Genesis 2:1-3 notes that God rested from the work of creation after seven days. Both versions of the Ten Commandments describe the Sabbath as a day of reflection on the blessings of God's creation (Exodus 20:8-11) and for release from the bondage of slavery (Deuteronomy 5:12-15). Deuteronomy 15 describes a period after seven years in which release from several kinds of debt and labor are itemized. The Sabbath was given as a time for rest, renewal, and recovery. Reflecting this Sabbath concern for the health and well-being of God's people, Jesus himself pulls away from the crowds frequently for prayer and rest (see, e.g. Mt. 14:13; Mk. 7:24). St. Mark recalls Jesus telling his disciples to "Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while," noting that "many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat." (Mk. 6:31) Rostered ministry is a work which is at the center of all this "coming and going." With the increased complexity of life in ministry, the puzzles become more difficult to solve. The demands for more effective ministry grow more urgent. The explosion of knowledge requires ceaseless learning. The mission of the Church is best served by the health, energy, spiritual renewal, and knowledge which a sabbatical leave provides for its rostered leaders and congregations.

Sabbatical Guidelines

A sabbatical is a carefully planned period of time - usually three months after the first five to seven years of service in a congregation - in which a rostered minister is granted time away from normal duties in order to study, reflect, and renew. A sabbatical is not a vacation, nor is it only continuing education; it is to renew the leader for a new season of ministry benefitting the mission of the congregation.

1. A sabbatical is recommended for rostered ministers after the first five to seven years of service in a congregation, and every five to seven years thereafter in conjunction with congregational mission planning.
2. The recommended time for sabbatical leave is three months.
3. When a congregation issues a call to a rostered minister, consideration should be given to the inclusion of sabbatical leave in the call documents.
4. The costs for a sabbatical leave should be covered by the congregation, including the continuance of salary, housing, retirement contributions, and other remuneration of the rostered person.
5. In congregations where there is only one rostered minister, the congregation should put aside money to cover pulpit supply and any other help needed during the rostered minister's sabbatical.
6. Following the completion of a sabbatical leave, a rostered minister is expected to commit to at least one year of service in the congregation.

Planning for a Sabbatical

1. The congregation costs of a sabbatical can be covered by budgeting for two weeks' extra salary each non- sabbatical year and placing those funds in an interest-bearing reserve account.
2. Rostered ministers should work with the staff support committee, congregation council, or employer to develop a study and renewal plan which will best serve the mission of the congregation at least six months before the sabbatical leave is to begin. The proposal is to be approved by the congregation council.
3. The congregation should plan for coverage as follows:
 - Provide pulpit supply as needed and requested.
 - Coverage for other ministerial duties (hospital visits, nursing home services, weddings, funerals, baptisms, etc.) as needed.
 - Coordination of programming needs (VBS, Sunday School, Confirmation, etc.) as needed.Neighboring congregations and ministers might consider partnering together to support sabbatical leave.
3. The rostered minister should submit a written report and evaluation of the sabbatical leave to the congregation council within six weeks after completing the leave.
4. Someone within the congregation should be appointed to keep a weekly journal of events during the rostered minister's absence so that upon return, the rostered minister might be "caught up."



APPENDIX D: PARSONAGE GUIDELINES AND AGREEMENTS

Parsonage Guidelines:

A parsonage is a home provided by the congregation for its rostered leader(s). The parsonage is to be an aid for the rostered leader to do ministry so the congregation will want to provide a good home. These guidelines are a way to help both the rostered minister and congregation. Since the parsonage is the minister's home, privacy should be respected. Congregation members are expected to follow the same boundaries as they would for any other home in the community. Because it is the home of the rostered minister, their desires should be consulted, as changes are necessary. The quality of the parsonage should meet a standard set by the homes of the majority of the congregation's members and should be adequate in size to accommodate families. The tenant/landlord model may apply on occasion, but its application is quite limited. Contrary to renters, the rostered minister normally has little choice of residence. The relationship between the rostered minister and congregation is not based on a lease or rental agreement, but upon a common bond in the service of Christ Jesus.

These are the suggested guidelines for congregations with a parsonage.

1. It is recommended that following appliances be provided in the parsonage:

- Stove/oven
- Dishwasher
- Softwater System (if needed)
- Humidifier/Dehumidifier (if needed)
- Refrigerator
- Washer and Dryer
- Garbage disposal (optional)
- Air Conditioning
- Wiring for TV and Internet

2. It is recommended that the following utilities be paid directly by the congregation.

- Electricity
- Gas
- Basic Telephone (local only)
- Garbage Removal
- Internet
- Water/Sewer
- TV (cable or satellite)
- Soft Water Service (if Needed)

3. Items that would normally be supplied by the congregation include:

- Paint
- Wallpaper
- Window Coverings
- Floor coverings
- Light fixtures
- Ceiling fans

5. When a minister first moves into a parsonage, the congregation should see that it is thoroughly clean and should usually plan to redecorate.
6. The colors, fabric, design, etc, selected in the redecoration would normally be selected by who will be living in the house, in consultation with the appropriate committee. The congregation, of course, would determine the price ranges for these items.
7. Parsonage maintenance and repair should be listed as a separate line item in the annual budget, with a clear understanding of who has the authority to spend these budgeted funds.
8. There should be an annual inspection of the parsonage that is conducted with the minister.
9. The minister and congregation should develop and annually update a list of necessary and desired repairs, maintenance, modernization, redecorating and remodeling projects and together prioritize these projects.
10. There should be a clear understanding about how regular maintenance and emergency repairs are to be handled. It is suggested that the minister be authorized to spend a specific dollar amount at his/her discretion. Any repairs in excess of this amount would require approval of the appropriate committee or the congregation council.
11. When a minister moves out of a parsonage and before all financial obligations are completed, there should be an inspection of the property to see that it is left clean and in good repair. The minister should be held responsible for any excess wear or damage caused to the parsonage while he or she was living there. This would include damage caused by children and pets.
12. The grounds around the parsonage are primarily the responsibility of the congregation. The congregation should see that the lawn, shrubbery and flowerbeds are in good condition when minister moves into the parsonage. The minister may be expected to care for these grounds (mow, rake, remove snow, apply fertilizer, insecticides, herbicides) or these responsibilities may be shared by the congregation. (The division of labor should be negotiated by the minister and the church council before the minister's arrival).
13. The congregation should consider taking care of the grounds around the parsonage while the minister is on vacation or sabbatical, if it is decided that this is

the minister's responsibility.

14. The congregation should provide suitable garage space for the minister's automobile(s). Normally, this would be space for two vehicles.

PARSONAGE AGREEMENT

To enhance the ministry of the Gospel among us, the congregation and the minister covenant to work with the following guidelines, which are established to provide a common understanding of expectations for both the congregation and the minister.

Congregational Responsibilities

- ◆ When selecting a parsonage, consideration should be given to its size and type, so it will serve a variety of ages and family needs.
- ◆ The parsonage's primary purpose is to provide housing for the minister and the minister's family, and not to provide additional meeting space for the congregation.
- ◆ Where a parish office must, of necessity, be within the parsonage, means should be taken to provide adequate privacy for both the parishioners and the minister and their family.
- ◆ It is the congregation's responsibility to provide the parsonage with major appliances.
- ◆ It is the congregation's responsibility to provide and maintain in working order a hot water heater and a furnace or other means of heating the parsonage, and water softener if deemed necessary because of water conditions.
- ◆ It is the congregation's responsibility to provide for normal maintenance and repair so that the parsonage is free from health hazards. Examples are as follows:
 - Electrical, water and sewer systems should be adequate.
 - Windows, doors and roof should be weather proofed against wind and water.
 - The basement should be checked for the presence of radon gas and corrective measures should be taken if the gas is present.
 - Measures should be taken to ensure that the basement does not flood.
 - Smoke alarms should be installed and maintained in working condition.
 - Insulation should be checked for asbestos, and if asbestos is present, corrective measures should be taken.
 - If the parsonage has lead water pipes for domestic use, the pipes should be checked for high lead concentration. If the lead concentration is higher than EPA standards, the pipes should be replaced.
 - If the services of an exterminator are required for pest control, the congregation should provide those services.
 - The parsonage should be in compliance with fire codes, which include two (2) means of escape from each level and smoke detectors.
- ◆ The congregation should provide for a utilities allowance that covers the cost of heat, lights, water, sewer, and garbage removal. The recommended method is for these bills to be paid directly by the congregation.

Rostered Minister Responsibilities

- ◆ The minister is responsible for any damage to the parsonage or property that is not considered normal wear, including damage done by children or pets. There should be dialogue between



the minister and the congregation to determine if they minister should facilitate repairs, or if the congregation will and invoice the minister accordingly.

- ◆ The minister shall act as caretaker of the parsonage and provide the following:
 - Ensure the parsonage is properly heated to prevent damage.
 - Provide for normal housekeeping and cleaning.
 - Provide for maintaining the lawn and grounds in a neat and orderly manner, as agreed upon.
 - Clear sidewalks and driveway of snow and maintain the lawn and grounds equipment in good working order, as agreed upon.
- ◆ The minister shall report needed repairs promptly to the appropriate committee.
- ◆ The minister shall make arrangements to invite the appropriate committee in to inspect the parsonage at least once per year.
- ◆ The minister shall make reasonable arrangements to allow the congregation to make needed repairs and do required maintenance.
- ◆ The minister is responsible for providing renter's insurance on personal contents.
- ◆ The minister shall clean the parsonage before leaving as follows:
 - The stove and oven must be left clean.
 - The refrigerator should be cleaned, turned off and door left open.
 - Provisions should be made for the disposal of unwanted items.
- ◆ In general, the minister should leave the parsonage in as good or better condition than it was upon arrival.

Letter of Understanding Regarding Parsonage

This is a letter of understanding between __(insert church name)___ Lutheran Church of __(city)___ and __(Rostered Ministers Name)_____. The parties agree and accept the understandings stated below and agree to abide by them without prejudice. Violation of this letter of understanding may result in legal recourse by either party.

The Church agrees to provide a parsonage to its minister and to allow for the full and complete use. The parsonage shall be used as a residence only, unless prior written arrangements have been established.

The address of the parsonage is: _____.

The minister shall agree to maintain the appearance of the interior/and exterior of said dwelling in a way and manner that is acceptable to obvious normal standards. This shall be limited to housekeeping, cleanliness, and/or damage to the property caused by occupants of said dwelling.

Upon notice of at least **24** hours, the interior of the dwelling may be inspected by a member(s) of the appropriate board overseeing the parsonage. (The notice should be in writing and properly delivered to the minister.) The purpose of this inspection is to evaluate the interior condition of the property and/or establish any maintenance deficiencies or up-grades.



Annual inspections will take place as well. These inspections will take place with the minister and/or spouse as they will have knowledge of problems/issues needing attention.

The Church shall maintain proper insurance to include property and liability coverage and recommend that the minister obtain "renters insurance" for their personal belongings.

Should a dispute arise as to the condition or manner in which the said minister is maintaining the dwelling, a meeting shall be convened between the minister and appropriate board overseeing the parsonage; and resolutions shall be attempted at that time.

This letter is to provide a protection of Church property, as well as, to provide for the privacy of the minister.

This letter shall be in effect at the signing of a Letter of Call with the minister and shall continue throughout the call to _____ Lutheran Church. This letter may be modified to provide for any additional concerns or situations, providing that all parties herein referenced are in agreement.

It is expected the following appliances be provided in that parsonage:

- Stove/Oven
- Soft water System (if needed)
- Refrigerator
- Garbage disposal (optional)
- Wiring for TV and Internet
- Dishwasher
- Humidifier/Dehumidifier (if needed)
- Washer and Dryer
- Air Conditioning

It is expected utilities be paid directly by the congregation or an adequate allowance be provided for:

- Electricity
- Basic Telephone (except personal long-distance calls)
- Internet
- TV (cable or satellite)
- Gas
- Garbage Removal
- Water/Sewer
- Soft Water Service (if Needed)

Date

Rostered Minister

Council President



**APPENDIX E: PROFESSIONAL EXPENSE ACCOUNTABLE REIMBURSEMENT
POLICY**

This is an example of what you could use. We provide this for your convenience, be sure to refer to IRS website to ensure that whatever language you adopt is in compliance with current policies.

The following resolution was duly adopted by the congregation council of _____(congregation name)_____ Lutheran Church at a regularly called meeting held on _____(date)_____, a Quorum being present.

Whereas income tax regulations 1.162-17 and 1.274-5(e) provide that an employee "need not report on his tax return" expenses paid or incurred by him or her solely for the benefit of his/her employer for which he/she is required to account and does account to the employer and which are charged directly or indirectly to the employer; and

Whereas income tax regulation 1.274-5(e) further provides that "an adequate accounting means the submission to the employer of a...statement of expense or similar record maintained by the employee in which the information as to each element of expenditure (amount, time and place, business purpose, and business relationship) is recorded at or near the time of the expenditure, together with supporting documentary evidence, in a manner which conforms to the 'adequate records" requirements" set forth in the regulation; and

Whereas _____ Lutheran Church desires to establish a reimbursement policy pursuant to regulations 1.162-17 and 1.274-5(e); therefore be it

Resolved, that _____ Lutheran Church hereby adopts a reimbursement policy pursuant to income tax regulations 1.162-17 and 1.274-5(e), upon the following terms and conditions:

1. Any minister called, or any person now or hereafter employed by _____ Lutheran Church shall be reimbursed for any ordinary and necessary business and professional expense incurred on behalf of the church, if the following conditions are satisfied:

- a. the expenses are reasonable in amount;
- b. the person incurring the expense documents the amount, time, place, business purpose, and business relationship of each such expense with the same kinds of documentary evidence as would be required to support a deduction of the expense on the person's federal income tax return; and
- c. the person documents such expenses by providing the church treasurer with an accounting of such expenses no less frequently than monthly. In no event will an expense be reimbursed if substantiated more than 60 days after the expense is paid or incurred by a minister or employee.

2. The church shall not include in a minister's or employee's W-2 form the amount of any business or professional expense properly substantiated and reimbursed according to the preceding paragraph, and these persons should not report the amount of and such reimbursement on his/her Form 1040.
3. Any church reimbursement that exceeds the amount of business or professional expenses properly accounted for pursuant to this reimbursement policy must be returned to the church within 120 days after the associated expenses are paid or incurred and shall not be retained by the minister or employee.
4. If, for any reason, the church's reimbursements are less than the amount of business and professional expenses properly substantiated by a minister or employee, the church will report no part of the reimbursements on the person's W-2, and the minister or employee may deduct the un-reimbursed expenses as allowed by law.
5. Under no circumstances will the church reimburse a minister or employee for business or professional expenses incurred on behalf of the church that are not properly substantiated according to this policy. Church and staff understand that this requirement is necessary to prevent our reimbursement plan from being classified as a "non-accountable" plan.
6. All receipts and other documentary evidence used by a minister or other employee to substantiate the business nature and amount of business expenses incurred on behalf of the church shall be retained by the church. The minister or employee may, at his/her election, make copies of such evidence.

[Updated April 2022]



Eastern North Dakota Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

CONSTITUTION, BYLAWS, and CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS

KEY CODE:

Amendments to **Required Provisions do NOT require action** at the Synod Assembly, as they take effect after the Churchwide Assembly. These amendments are highlighted in blue.

Resolution #1: Amendments to **Non-Required Provisions DO require action** at the Synod Assembly. These amendments are highlighted in yellow. Majority vote needed to approve.

Resolution #2: Amendment to **Bylaw S11.02.01**. This amendment is highlighted in pink. 2/3 vote needed to approve.

Additions are underlined. Deletions are ~~struck through~~ in the text.

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Updated as of 10/2025

CODIFICATION EXPLANATION

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

Major sections are designated as chapters. The chapters are numbered 1 through 19. The chapter designation becomes the first number in the codification sequence and is followed by a period. Thus provisions in Chapter 8. OFFICERS are preceded by "8." General subjects are normally titled and designated by a number ending in zero. Thus, a subdivision of Chapter 8 that contains provisions regarding "Bishop" is codified and titled "S8.10."

Constitutional provisions are codified with two sets of numbers, the chapter number and a two-digit number preceding the second period in the codification. Thus, one constitutional provision relating to the Synod Council is codified S10.01.

Bylaws are codified with three sets of numbers, the chapter number, the related constitutional provisional number, and a two-digit number. Thus, one bylaw related to the Synod Council and its governing body is codified S10.07.11.

Continuing Resolutions are also codified with three sets of numbers except that the third set is preceded by a capital letter. Thus, a continuing resolution might be numbered 11. to designate the chapter; 04. to designate the subject matter within the chapter; and the third set might be numbered A87. in the codification S11.04.A87. to indicate by the "A" that it is the first continuing resolution regarding that subject and by the "87" that it was adopted in 1987.

When many related provisions are parts of a unit that are considered inseparable they are normally lettered "a," "b," "c," etc. When many related provisions are parts of a unit that are considered separable, such as a list of duties, they are normally numbered in sequence. If the related provisions cannot be clearly judged to be separable or inseparable, preference will be given to a number sequence.

If chapter numbers are considered the major sequence number, constitution numbers as a fraction of the chapter number, and bylaw numbers as a fraction of the constitution number, then the codification can be said to provide progressive sequence. Thus S10.03. will precede S10.07.01., and S12.03.21. will precede S12.04.

In this constitution, "Church" with a capital letter is used in references to the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. In references to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the words "church" and "this church" in lower case letters are employed.

+ indicates required provisions.

CHAPTER 1. NAME AND INCORPORATION

- +S1.01. The name of this synod as determined by the Churchwide Assembly shall be Eastern North Dakota Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- +S1.02. For the purposes of this constitution and the accompanying bylaws, the Eastern North Dakota Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is hereafter designated as “this synod” or “the synod.”
- +S1.11. This synod shall be incorporated. Amendments to the articles of incorporation of this synod shall be submitted to the Church Council for ratification before filing.
- S1.11.01. The Eastern North Dakota Synod is incorporated in the state of Minnesota (1986).
- +S1.21. The seal of this synod is a cross with three united flames emanating from the base of the cross and three entwined circles beside the cross. The name of this synod forms the circular outer edge of the seal.

CHAPTER 2. STATUS

- +S2.01. This synod possesses the powers conferred upon it, and accepts the duties and responsibilities assigned to it, in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* which are recognized as having governing force in the life of this synod.
- +S2.02. The name Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA or “this church”) as used herein refers in general references to this whole church, including its three expressions: congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization. The name Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is also the name of the corporation of the churchwide organization to which specific references may be made herein.
- +S2.03. No provision of this constitution shall be inconsistent with the constitution and bylaws of this church.

CHAPTER 3. TERRITORY

- +S3.01. The territory of this synod, as determined by the Churchwide Assembly, shall be: the counties of Barnes, Benson (except the congregation Leeds Evangelical), Cass, Cavalier, Dickey, Eddy, Foster, Grand Forks, Griggs, LaMoure, Nelson, Pembina, Ramsey, Ransom, Richland, Rolette, Sargent, Steele, Stutsman, Towner, Traill, Walsh in the state of NORTH DAKOTA; the congregations Martin Luther and Emmanuel, Logan County, in the state of NORTH DAKOTA.
- +S3.02. “Determined by the Churchwide Assembly,” as stipulated by +S3.01., is understood to include the reported changes in synod relationship made by any congregation in a border area agreed under ELCA bylaws 10.01.01. and

10.01.03.

CHAPTER 4. CONFESSION OF FAITH

- +S4.01.** This synod confesses the Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- +S4.02.** This synod confesses Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and the Gospel as the power of God for the salvation of all who believe.
 - a. Jesus Christ is the Word of God incarnate, through whom everything was made and through whose life, death, and resurrection God fashions a new creation.
 - b. The proclamation of God's message to us as both Law and Gospel is the Word of God, revealing judgment and mercy through word and deed, beginning with the Word in creation, continuing in the history of Israel, and centering in all its fullness in the person and work of Jesus Christ.
 - c. The canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the written Word of God. Inspired by God's Spirit speaking through their authors, they record and announce God's revelation centering in Jesus Christ. Through them God's Spirit speaks to us to create and sustain Christian faith and fellowship for service in the world.
- +S4.03.** This synod accepts the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God and the authoritative source and norm of its proclamation, faith, and life.
- +S4.04.** This synod accepts the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds as true declarations of the faith of this synod.
- +S4.05.** This synod accepts the Unaltered Augsburg Confession as a true witness to the Gospel, acknowledging as one with it in faith and doctrine all churches that likewise accept the teachings of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession.
- +S4.06.** This synod accepts the other confessional writings in the Book of Concord, namely, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles and the Treatise, the Small Catechism, the Large Catechism, and the Formula of Concord, as further valid interpretations of the faith of the Church.
- +S4.07.** This synod confesses the Gospel, recorded in the Holy Scripture and confessed in the ecumenical creeds and Lutheran confessional writings, as the power of God to create and sustain the Church of God's mission in the world.

CHAPTER 5. NATURE OF THE CHURCH

- +S5.01.** All power in the Church belongs to our Lord Jesus Christ, its head. All actions of this synod are to be carried out under his rule and authority.
- +S5.02.** This church confesses the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church and is resolved to serve Christian Unity throughout the world.

- +S5.03. The Church exists both as an inclusive fellowship and as local congregations gathered for worship and Christian service. Congregations find their fulfillment in the universal community of the Church, and the universal Church exists in and through congregations. This church, therefore, derives its character and powers both from the sanction and representation of its congregations and from its inherent nature as an expression of the broader fellowship of the faithful. In length, it acknowledges itself to be in the historic continuity of the communion of saints; in breadth, it expresses the fellowship of believers and congregations in our day.
- +S5.04. This church, inspired and led by the Holy Spirit, participates in The Lutheran World Federation as a global communion of churches, engaging in faithful witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ and in service for the sake of God's mission in the world.

CHAPTER 6. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

- +S6.01. The Church is a people created by God in Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit, called and sent to bear witness to God's creative, redeeming, and sanctifying activity in the world.
- +S6.02. To participate in God's mission, this synod as a part of the Church shall:
 - a. proclaim God's saving Gospel of justification by grace for Christ's sake through faith alone, according to the apostolic witness in the Holy Scripture, preserving and transmitting the Gospel faithfully to future generations.
 - b. carry out Christ's Great Commission by reaching out to all people to bring them to faith in Christ and by doing all ministry with a global awareness consistent with the understanding of God as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier of all.
 - c. serve in response to God's love to meet human needs, caring for the sick and the aged, advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations, and standing in solidarity with the poor and oppressed and committing itself to their needs.
 - d. worship God in proclamation of the Word and administration of the sacraments and through lives of prayer, praise, thanksgiving, witness, and service.
 - e. nurture its members in the Word of God so as to grow in faith and hope and love, to see daily life as the primary setting for the exercise of their Christian calling, and to use the gifts of the Spirit for their life together and for their calling in the world.
 - f. manifest the unity given to the people of God by living together in the love of Christ and by joining with other Christians in prayer and action to express and preserve the unity which the Spirit gives.
- +S6.03. This synod, in cooperation with the churchwide organization, shall bear primary responsibility for the oversight of the life and mission of this church in its territory. In fulfillment of this role and consistent with policies and procedures of this church, the synod shall:

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

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

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

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

- a. Developing of new ministries, redevelopment of existing ministries, and support and assistance in the conclusion, if necessary, of a particular ministry;
- b. Leading and encouraging of congregations in their evangelism efforts;
- c. Assisting members of its congregations in carrying out their ministries in the world;
- d. Encouraging congregations to respond to human need, work for justice and peace, care for the sick and the suffering, and participate responsibly in society;
- e. Providing resources for congregational life;

- f. Grouping congregations in conferences, cluster, coalitions, or other area subdivisions for mission purposes.
- +S6.03.03.** In strengthening interdependent relationships among congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization, and in fostering relationships with agencies and institutions affiliated with or related to this church as well as with ecumenical partners, the responsibilities of the synod include the following:
- a. Promoting interdependent relationships among congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization, and entering into relationship with other synods in the region.
 - b. Fostering organizations for youth, women, and men, and organizations for language or ethnic communities;
 - c. Developing relationships with social ministry organizations and ministries, participating in their mission planning, and providing supportive funding;
 - d. Supporting relationships with and providing supportive funding on behalf of colleges, universities, and campus ministries;
 - e. Maintaining relationships with and providing supportive funding on behalf of seminaries and continuing education centers;
 - f. Fostering supporting relationships with camps and other outdoor ministries;
 - g. Fostering supporting relationships with preschools, elementary schools, and secondary schools operated by congregations of the synod;
 - h. Fostering relationships with ecumenical and global companions;
 - i. Cooperating with other synods and the churchwide organization in creating, using, and supporting regions to carry out those functions of the synod which can best be done cooperatively with other synods and the churchwide organization.
- +S6.03.04.** In interpreting the work of this church on the territory of the synod, the responsibilities of the synod include the following:
- a. Encouraging financial support for the work of this church by individuals and congregations;
 - b. Participating in churchwide programs;
 - c. Interpreting social statements in a manner consistent with the interpretation given by the churchwide unit or office which assisted in the development of the statement, and suggestion of social study issues;
 - d. Providing ecumenical guidance and encouragement
- S6.03.05.** The Synod Council shall determine the procedure for election of the synod voting members to the Churchwide Assembly. The bishop and vice president shall be members of the synod delegation to each Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- +S6.04.** Except as otherwise provided in this constitution and bylaws, the Synod Council shall establish processes that will ensure that at least 60 percent of the members of the synod assemblies, councils, committees, boards, and other organizational units shall be laypersons; and that, as nearly as possible, at least 45 percent of the lay members of assemblies, councils, committees,

boards, or other organizational units shall be women and, as nearly as possible, at least 45 percent shall be men; and that, where possible, the representation of rostered ministers shall include both men and women. This synod shall establish processes that will enable it to reach a minimum goal that 10 percent of its assemblies, councils, committees, boards, or other organizational units be persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English.

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

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

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

+S6.06. References herein to the nature of the relationship between the three expressions of this church—congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization—as being interdependent or as being in a partnership relationship describe the mutual responsibility of these expressions in God's mission and the fulfillment of the purposes of this church as described in this chapter, and do not imply or describe the creation of partnerships, co-ventures, agencies, or other legal relationships recognized in civil law.

CHAPTER 7. SYNOD ASSEMBLY

+S7.01. This synod shall have a Synod Assembly, which shall be its highest legislative authority. The powers of the Synod Assembly are limited only by the provisions in the Articles of Incorporation, this constitution and bylaws, the assembly's own resolutions, and the constitutions and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

- S7.01.01.** To the extent permitted by Minnesota state law, *the Synod Council can take action to conduct a regular or special Synod Assembly via remote or digital means if it is deemed appropriate under the circumstances.*
- +S7.11.** A regular meeting of the Synod Assembly shall be held at least triennially.
- S7.11.01.** The time and place of the Eastern North Dakota Synod Assembly shall be determined by the Synod Council. The time and place for the next regular assembly normally shall be announced seven months prior to the assembly.
- S7.12.** Special meetings of the Synod Assembly may be called by the bishop with the consent of the Synod Council, or at the request of the Synod Council, and shall be called by the bishop at the request of **50** of the voting members of the last regular Synod Assembly.
- a. The notice of each special meeting shall define the purpose for which it is to be held. The scope of actions to be taken at such a special meeting shall be limited to the subject matter(s) described in the notice.
 - b. If the special meeting of the Synod Assembly is required for the purpose of electing a successor bishop because of death, resignation, or inability to serve, the special meeting shall be called by the synod council after consultation with the presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- S7.13.** Notice of the time and place of all meetings of the Synod Assembly shall be given by the secretary of this synod.
- S7.13.01.** Notice of all meetings may be provided electronically.
- S7.14.** One-third of the members of the Synod Assembly shall constitute a quorum
- +S7.21.** The membership of the Synod Assembly, of which at least 60 percent of the voting membership shall be composed of laypersons, shall be constituted as follows:
- a. All rostered ministers under call on the roster of this synod shall be voting members of the Synod Assembly.
 - b. Lay voting members shall be elected by each congregation or its council as follows: A minimum of one lay member elected by from each congregation with fewer than 175 baptized members and a minimum of two lay members elected by from each congregation with more than 175 baptized members related to this synod, typically one of whom shall be a man and one of whom shall be a woman, shall be voting members. The Synod Council shall establish a formula to provide additional lay representation from congregations on the basis of the number of baptized members in the congregation. The Synod Council shall seek to ensure that, as nearly as possible, at least 45 percent of the lay members of the assembly shall be women and, as nearly as possible, at least 45 percent shall be men.
 - c. Voting membership shall include the officers of this synod.
- S7.21.01.** Voting members shall begin serving with the opening of a regular Synod

Assembly and shall continue serving until the opening of the next regular Synod Assembly.

- +S7.21.02.** If a special Synod Assembly is called and voting members at the previous assembly are unable to serve as voting members, where permitted by state law, the congregation **through the Congregation Council or its council** may elect new members who shall continue to serve until the next regular Synod Assembly.
- S7.22.** This synod may establish processes that permit retired rostered ministers, or those granted disability status, or on leave from call, on the roster of this synod to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, provided that such processes not result in fewer than 60% of the voting members of the Synod Assembly being laypersons in contravention of +S7.21. If the synod does not establish processes to permit the rostered ministers specified above to serve as voting members, they shall have voice but not vote in the meetings of the Synod Assembly.
- S7.22.01.** In accord with S7.21. and S7.22., the following shall be authorized by the Synod Council annually to serve as voting members of the synod assembly:
- a. ELCA Members serving as Synod Authorized Ministers under contract in congregations or ministries of this synod (this appointment would be in addition to the congregation's allotment of voting lay members)
 - b. Retired ministers of Word and Sacrament or ministers of Word and Service who are serving under contract as interim ministers in congregations or ministries of this synod
 - c. Ministers of Word and Sacrament and Ministers of Word and Service on leave from call who are serving under contract as interim ministers in congregations or ministries of this synod
 - d. Additional Ministers of Word and Sacrament or Ministers of Word and Service who are retired, granted disability status, or on leave from call may request to be voting members. Requests must be made at least forty-five (45) days in advance of opening of the assembly. No more than twenty-five percent (25%) of the total number of rostered ministers of this synod who are retired, granted disability status, or on leave from call may be granted membership under this provision. Granting voting rights under this provision shall be in accord with +7.21 to maintain the voting membership as at least sixty percent (60%) lay persons.
- +S7.23.** The presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and such other official representatives of the churchwide organization as may be designated by the presiding bishop, shall have voice but not vote in the meetings of the Synod Assembly. Like privileges shall be accorded to those additional persons whom the Synod Assembly or the Synod Council shall from time to time designate.
- S7.24.** Ministers under call on the rosters of this synod shall remain as members of the Synod Assembly so long as they remain under call and so long as their names appear on the rosters of this synod. Lay members of the Synod Assembly representing congregations shall continue as such until the opening of the

next regular synod assembly, or unless replaced by the election of new members for a special synod assembly, or until they have been disqualified by termination of congregation membership.

- +S7.25.** Except as otherwise provided in this constitution or in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, each voting member of the Synod Assembly shall be a voting member of a congregation of this synod or a confirmed member of a synod-authorized worshiping community of this synod.
- S7.26.** This synod may establish processes through the Synod Council that permit persons currently serving as synod-authorized ministers and/or lay representatives of authorized worshiping communities and/or outreach ministries of the synod, which have been authorized under ELCA bylaw 10.01.04., to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, consistent with +S7.21.
- S7.27.** This synod may establish processes through the Synod Council to grant a minister of Word and Sacrament from a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by the Churchwide Assembly the privilege of both voice and vote in the Synod Assembly during the period of that minister's service in a congregation of this church.
- S7.28.** Duly elected voting members of the Synod Council who are not otherwise voting members of the Synod Assembly under +S7.21. shall be granted the privilege of both voice and vote as members of the Synod Assembly.
- +S7.31.** Proxy and absentee voting shall not be permitted in the transaction of any business of the Synod Assembly.
- S7.32.** *Robert's Rules of Order*, latest edition, shall govern parliamentary procedure of the Synod Assembly, unless otherwise ordered by the assembly.
- S7.33.** "Ex-officio" as used herein means membership with full rights of voice and vote unless otherwise expressly limited.
- S7.34.01.** The Eastern North Dakota Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America recognizes the following rules in preparing for and conducting the annual assembly:
- a. All reports of officers and chairpersons of boards or committees shall be received by the bishop of this synod 30 days prior to the assembly.
 - b. All appointments for general religious services or public meetings shall be subject to approval by the bishop.
 - c. Holy Communion shall be administered at each assembly.
 - d. The Synod Council shall approve the proposed agenda and program for each assembly.
 - e. The Synod Council shall appoint a parliamentarian to serve during the Synod Assembly.
 - f. The secretary shall distribute the assembly reports to all ministers under call on the rosters of this synod and to all lay voting

- members at least 14 days before each regular assembly.
- g. It shall be the usual function of the secretary to announce the time and place of the next regularly scheduled synod assembly during the assembly.
 - h. The **Credentials Committee** shall consist of two ministers of Word and Sacrament and/or ministers of Word and Service and three lay persons appointed by the bishop. This committee shall examine the applications and credentials of voting members to the Synod Assembly and report to the assembly.
 - i. The **Elections Committee** shall consist of three ministers of Word and Sacrament and/or ministers of Word and Service and five lay persons appointed by the bishop. This committee shall supervise the synod elections, keep a correct list of voting members, receive and tabulate the various ballots and announce election results to the Synod Assembly.
 - j. Prior to the Synod Assembly the **Resolutions Committee** shall be chosen by the Synod Council. The composition of the committee shall be three ministers of Word and Sacrament and/or ministers of Word and Service and five lay persons. There shall be at least one member from each conference. The committee shall serve until the Synod Assembly meets. All reports and proposed resolutions for each regular assembly shall be referred to the Resolutions Committee. This committee shall study the reports and proposed resolutions, make appropriate comment thereon, and transmit to the assembly the recommendations of the bishop and/or others who submit reports along with the committee's own recommendations.
 - k. The **Committee on Reference and Counsel** shall carry on the work of the Resolutions Committee during the Synod Assembly. Representatives from the Resolutions Committee should serve on this committee for continuity. This committee shall consist of two ministers of Word and Sacrament and/or ministers of Word and Service and three lay persons appointed by the bishop. A resolution of general character which is not germane to the pending question or report shall be given by the proposer to the Reference and Counsel Committee, which shall report thereon to the assembly with its recommendations. Other duties of the committee shall be:
 1. to recommend special orders of business;
 2. to grant or deny permission to distribute printed matter not issued from the synod office; and
 3. to give such assistance to the bishop as may be desired in the course of the assembly.
 - l. The **Committee on Minutes** shall consist of two ministers of Word and Sacrament and/or ministers of Word and Service and three lay persons appointed by the bishop. The committee shall meet with the secretary of this synod at designated times to review the minutes. The bishop and secretary shall, after making any necessary corrections therein, certify the printed minutes of the assembly just concluded as the official

minutes of said assembly, mail distribute minutes to voting members of said assembly, submit one copy to the next regular assembly for approval, and deposit one copy in the archives of the synod.

CHAPTER 8. OFFICERS

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

S8.10. Bishop

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

S8.11.01. When authorized by the Synod Council in order to address special circumstances, the synod bishop may be compensated as an employee or contractor for specified services to another expression of this church. Such an arrangement may be terminated by the Synod Assembly or Synod Council if determined to be detrimental to the function of the office or if the special circumstances no longer apply.

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

- a. Preach, teach, and administer the sacraments in accord with the Confession of Faith of this church.
- b. Have primary responsibility for the ministry of Word and Sacrament in this synod and its congregations, providing pastoral care and leadership for this synod, its congregations, its ministers of Word and Sacrament, and its Ministers of Word and Service.
- c. Exercise solely this church's power to ordain (or provide for the ordination by another synod bishop of) approved candidates who have received and accepted a properly issued, duly attested letter of call for the office of ministry of Word and Sacrament (and as provided in the bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America).
- d. Ordain (or provide for the ordination of) approved candidates who have received and accepted a properly issued, duly attested letter of call for service as ministers of Word and Service of this church.
- e. Attest letters of call for persons called to serve congregations in the synod, letters of call for persons called by the Synod Council, and letters of call for persons on the rosters of this synod called by the Church Council.
- f. Install (or provide for the installation of) rostered ministers whose calls the bishop has attested.
- g. Exercise leadership in the mission of this church and in so doing:
 - 1) Interpret and advocate the mission and theology of the whole church;
 - 2) Lead in fostering support for and commitment to the mission of this church within this synod;
 - 3) Coordinate the use of the resources available to this synod as it seeks to promote the health of this church's life and witness in the areas served by this synod;

- 4) Submit a report to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly concerning the synod's life and work; and
 - 5) Advise and counsel this synod's related institutions and organizations.
- h. Practice leadership in strengthening the unity of the Church and in so doing:
- 1) Exercise oversight of the preaching, teaching, and administration of the sacraments within this synod in accord with the Confession of Faith of this church;
 - 2) Be responsible for administering the constitutionally established processes for the resolution of controversies and for the discipline of rostered ministers and congregations of this synod;
 - 3) Be the chief ecumenical officer of this synod;
 - 4) Be a member of the Conference of Bishops and consult regularly with other synod bishops;
 - 5) Foster awareness of other churches throughout the Lutheran world communion and, where appropriate, engage in contact with leaders of those churches;
 - 6) Cultivate communion in faith and mission with appropriate Christian judicatory leaders functioning within the territory of this synod; and
 - 7) Be *ex-officio* member of the Churchwide Assembly.
- i. Oversee and administer the work of this synod and in so doing:
- 1) Serve as the president of the synod corporation and be the chief executive and administrative officer of this synod, who is authorized and empowered, in the name of this synod, to sign deeds or other instruments and to affix the seal of this synod;
 - 2) Preside at all meetings of the Synod Assembly and provide for the preparation of the agenda for the Synod Assembly, Synod Council, and the council's Executive Committee;
 - 3) Ensure that the constitution and bylaws of the synod and of the churchwide organization are duly observed within this synod, and that the actions of the synod in conformity therewith are carried into effect;
 - 4) Direct and guide the work of the other officers;
 - 5) Exercise supervision over the work of all synod staff members;
 - 6) Appoint all committees for which provision is not otherwise made;
 - 7) Be a member of all committees and any other organizational units of the synod, except as otherwise provided in this constitution;
 - 8) Provide for preparation and maintenance of synod rosters containing the names and addresses of all rostered ministers of this synod and a record of the calls under which they are serving or the date on which their retired or disability status took effect;
 - 9) Annually bring to the attention of the Synod Council the names of all rostered ministers on leave from call or engaged in approved graduate study in conformity with the constitution, bylaws and continuing resolutions of this church and pursuant to prior action of this synod through the Synod Council;
 - 10) Provide for prompt reporting to the secretary of this church of:
 - a. additions to and subtractions from the rosters of this synod;
 - b. the issuance of certificates of transfer for rostered ministers in good standing who have received and accepted a properly

issued, duly attested, regular letter of call under the jurisdiction of another synod; and

- c. the entrance of the names of such persons for whom proper certificates of transfer have been received
- 11) Provide for preparation and maintenance of a roster of the congregations of this synod and the names of the laypersons who have been elected to represent them; and
- 12) appoint a statistician of the synod, who shall secure the reports of the congregations and make the reports available to the secretary of this church for collation, analysis, and distribution of the statistical summaries to this synod and the other synods of this church.

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

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

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

+S8.16. Conflicts of Interest

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

- a. Whenever a synod bishop determines that a matter of the kind described in +S8.16.01.b. may require the bishop's determination or action with respect to a related individual as defined in +S8.16.01.c., the synod bishop shall withdraw from personal involvement in such matter and shall so notify the presiding bishop. The presiding bishop shall then appoint another synod bishop from the same region to handle the matter to conclusion. In dealing with such matter, the appointed bishop shall exercise all of the functions and authority to the same extent as if the appointed bishop were the elected bishop of the withdrawing bishop's synod.
- b. Matters include any proceedings under Chapter 20, proceedings under provisions 7.46. and 7.75. of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* (+S14.18. and +S14.43.), candidacy, reinstatement, and similar matters where determinations or actions by the synod bishop could change, limit, restrict, approve, authorize, or deny the related individual's ministry on one of the official rosters of this church.

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

S8.20. Vice President

+S8.21. The vice president shall be elected by the Synod Assembly. The vice president shall be a layperson. The vice president shall be a voting member of a congregation of this synod or a confirmed member of a synod-authorized worshiping community of this synod. The vice president shall not receive a salary for the performance of the duties of the office.

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

S8.22.01. The vice president shall also:

- a. chair meetings of the Executive Committee;
- b. assist the bishop in the preparation of the agenda for meetings of the Synod Council and Executive Committee;
- c. be an *ex-officio* member of the Nominating Committee;
- d. serve as one of the allotted voting members of the Churchwide Assembly; and
- e. be responsible for meeting and communicating with voting members elected by this synod to the Churchwide Assembly.

S8.30. Secretary

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

+S8.32. The secretary shall:

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

S8.32.01. The secretary shall also keep the minutes of all meetings of the Synod Council's Executive Committee and be responsible for the printing and distribution of such minutes.

- S8.32.02.** The secretary shall be responsible for introduction into this constitution of:
- a. provisions amended by this church upon receipt of formal certification thereof from the secretary of this church, as directed in +S18.11. of this constitution.
 - b. amendments to the Constitution for Synods, after being officially informed by the secretary of this church and after a majority vote at any subsequent meeting of the Synod Assembly without presentation at a prior Synod Assembly, as directed in +S18.12. of this constitution.

S8.40. Treasurer

- +S8.41.** The treasurer may be elected by the Synod Assembly or may be appointed by the Synod Council. The treasurer shall be a voting member of a congregation of this synod or a confirmed member of a synod-authorized worshiping community 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.
 - 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.

S8.50. General Provisions

- +S8.51.** The terms of office of the officers of this synod shall be as follows:
- a. The bishop of this synod shall be elected to a term of six years and may be re-elected.
 - b. The vice president and secretary of this synod shall be elected to a term of four years and may be re-elected. The officer shall serve until a successor takes office.
 - c. The treasurer of this synod shall be elected to a term of four years and may be re-elected. The treasurer shall serve until a successor takes office.

- S8.51.01.** The bishop may be elected for a maximum of two consecutive terms.
- S8.51.02.** The vice president, secretary, and treasurer may be elected for a maximum of two consecutive terms.
- +S8.52.** The terms of the officers shall begin on the first day of the first month following election or, in special circumstances, at a time designated by the Synod Council.
- +S8.53.** Each officer shall be a voting member in a congregation **or a confirmed member of a synod-authorized worshiping community** of this synod, except that the bishop need not be a member of a congregation of this synod at the time of election.
- +S8.54.** Should the bishop die, resign, or be unable to serve, the vice president, after consultation with the presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, shall convene the Synod Council to arrange for the appropriate care of the responsibilities of the bishop until an election of a new bishop can be held or, in the case of temporary disability, until the bishop is able to serve again. Such arrangements may include the appointment by the Synod Council of an interim bishop, who during the vacancy or period of disability shall possess all of the powers and authority of a regularly elected bishop. The term of the successor bishop, elected by the next Synod Assembly or a special meeting of the Synod Assembly called for the purpose of election, shall be six years, with subsequent election to take place at the Synod Assembly closest to the expiration of such a term and with the starting date of a successor term to be governed by constitutional provision S8.52.
- S8.55.** Should the vice president, secretary, or treasurer die, resign, or be unable to serve, the bishop, with the approval of the Executive Committee of the Synod Council, shall arrange for the appropriate care of the responsibilities of the officer until an election of a new officer can be held or, in the case of temporary disability, until the officer is able to serve again. The term of the successor officer, elected by the next Synod Assembly, shall be four years. If the treasurer is appointed by the Synod Council, the Synod Council shall appoint a new treasurer to a four-year term.
- +S8.56.** The Executive Committee of the Synod Council shall determine whether an officer is unable to serve; the officer may appeal the decision of the Executive Committee by requesting a hearing before the Synod Council. A meeting to determine the ability of an officer to serve shall be called upon the request of at least three members of the Executive Committee and prior written notice of the meeting shall be given to the officer in question at least ten calendar days prior to the meeting.
- +S8.57.** The recall or dismissal of an officer and the vacating of office may be effected for willful disregard or violation of the constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of this church; for such physical or mental disability as renders the officer incapable of performing the duties of office; or for such conduct as

would subject the officer to disciplinary action as a rostered minister or as a member of a congregation of this church.

- a. Proceedings for the recall or dismissal of a synod bishop shall be instituted by written petition by:
 - 1) The Synod Council on an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of its elected members present and voting;
 - 2) The Synod Assembly on an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of its members present and voting;
 - 3) At least 10 synod bishops; or
 - 4) The presiding bishop of this church;
- b. Proceedings for the recall or dismissal of an officer of a synod, other than the synod bishop, shall be instituted by written petition by:
 - 1) The Synod Council on an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of its elected members present and voting;
 - 2) The Synod Assembly on an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of its members present and voting; or
 - 3) The synod bishop.
- c. The petition shall be filed with the chair of the Committee on Appeals (in care of the secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 8765 West Higgins Road, Chicago, Illinois 60631) and shall set forth the specific charge or charges.
- d. Upon the filing of a written petition, the Executive Committee of the Synod Council may temporarily suspend the officer from service in the synod without prejudice, but with continuation of compensation, including benefits, if the officer is a salaried employee of the synod.
- e. In the case of alleged physical or mental incapacity of an officer of the synod, the procedures outlined in +S8.56 shall be followed, and such officer shall comply with the decision of the Synod Council. If such officer fails or refuses to comply, the Synod Council may proceed to petition for recall or dismissal as follows:
 - 1) The Synod Council will submit a written report of their findings and the basis of their decision to the Committee on Appeals.
 - 2) The Committee on Appeals, exclusive of any members who are disqualified, shall review the findings and decision of the Synod Council and by an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of those present and voting may adopt the findings and grant the petition.
- f. If the synod officer is a minister of Word and Sacrament, grounds for recall or dismissal include those set forth in ELCA bylaw 20.22.01., and as defined under the process described in ELCA constitutional provisions 20.21. and 20.22. as grounds for discipline. If the officer is a minister of Word and Service, grounds for recall or dismissal include those set forth in ELCA bylaw 20.23.01. and as defined under the process describe in ELCA constitutional provisions 20.21. and 20.22., as grounds for discipline.
- g. If the officer is a layperson, grounds for recall or dismissal include those set forth in ELCA bylaw 20.41.01 as grounds for discipline.
- h. If the case of alleged willful disregard or violation of the

constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions or of alleged conduct as would subject the officer to disciplinary action, the following procedures shall apply:

- 1) The petition shall be referred to the Committee on Appeals, which shall function as the discipline hearing committee that shall conduct a hearing in accordance with the rules provided for in ELACA bylaw 20.22.14. except to the extent that those rules are in conflict with the provisions of this bylaw; and
 - 2) The members of the Committee on Appeals, other than those who are disqualified, may grant the petition by an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of those present and voting.
- i. Written notice of a decision by the Committee on Appeals that the charges have been sustained shall be given to the affected officer and to the Synod Council, and the office shall be vacated.

+S8.58. If the bishop is to be temporarily absent from the synod for an extended period not to exceed 90 days, the bishop, after consultation with the presiding bishop and with the consent of the Synod Council, may appoint as acting bishop for such period a minister of Word and Sacrament of this church. Except as limited by action of the Synod Council, an acting bishop shall possess all of the powers and authority of a regularly elected bishop other than authority to ordain or to authorize the ordination of properly approved candidates for ordination.

CHAPTER 9. NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

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

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

S9.03. There shall be a **Nominating Committee** consisting of eleven 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 the nominations are made by the Nominating Committee.

S9.03.01 The Synod Council shall take care to ensure that the committee normally consists of:

- a. One member elected from each conference at its respective assembly to serve for a three-year term, not eligible for re-election.
- b. At least one of the members of the committee shall be filled by a person of color or whose primary language is other than English.
- c. A chairperson appointed by the Synod Council to a three-year term, not eligible for re-election.

d. The bishop and the vice president of this synod.

S9.03.02. The Nominating Committee shall:

- a. Present a slate of candidates for each of the following positions for election by the Synod Assembly:
 - 1) Vice President;
 - 2) Secretary;
 - 3) Treasurer;
 - 4) One youth and one young adult positions on the Synod Council;
 - 5) Two multicultural positions on the Synod Council which shall be filled by lay persons of color or persons whose primary language is other than English;
 - 6) Positions on the Consultation Committee as outlined in +S11.02.; and
 - 7) Positions on the Committee on Discipline as outlined in +S11.03.
- b. Biographical information on candidates for Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer shall be presented before voting begins at the Synod Assembly.
- c. Actively seek ways to receive suggestions of qualified, committed persons who may wish to serve within this synod.

S9.04. The bishop shall be elected by the Synod Assembly. 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 (including ties in the final qualifying position) on the second ballot, and two-thirds of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. The fourth ballot shall be limited to the three persons ~~(plus ties)~~ who receive the greatest number of legal votes (including ties in the final qualifying position) on the third ballot, and 60 percent of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. On subsequent ballots a majority of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. These ballots shall be limited to the two persons ~~(plus ties)~~ who receive the greatest number of legal votes (including ties in the final qualifying position) on the previous ballot.

- a. A sitting bishop must submit written notification to the synod nominating committee at least 120 days prior to the Synod Assembly as to his/her intentions for seeking another term.
- b. In preparation for a regular or special Synod Assembly at which the election of the bishop is to occur, congregations of the synod, 100 days in advance of such an assembly, may submit the names of up to three ministers of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to the secretary of the conference of which the congregation is a part.
- c. The secretary of the conference, with the other officers of the conference, shall tabulate the names submitted by congregations and report the results to the synodical Nominating Committee no less than 90

days in advance of the regular or special Synod Assembly. Basic biographical information will be made available at the conference assemblies for each of the candidates being brought forward. At the conference assembly, there will be a write-in option. Any voting member at the conference assembly may submit the name of any minister of Word and Sacrament in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as a nominee for consideration for the position of synodical bishop.

- d. Sixty-five days in advance of the regular or special Synod Assembly at which the bishop is to be elected, conference assemblies shall be held to vote on a maximum of seven names per conference from a list as tabulated from conference reports to the synodical Nominating Committee.
- e. Fifty days in advance of the regular or special Synod Assembly at which the bishop is to be elected, the Nominating Committee shall tabulate the results of the conference assembly votes as reported to the committee by the secretary of each conference. In that process, the Nominating Committee shall identify the seven ordained ministers, plus any tie for the seventh place, named by the greatest number of conferences. The Nominating Committee shall determine if any of the seven ministers of Word and Sacrament, plus a possible tie, would be unwilling or unable to serve if elected. If so, that person's name shall be removed from the list and the minister receiving the next highest number of votes shall be included for the slate.
- f. Prior to thirty days in advance of the regular or special Synod Assembly at which the bishop is to be elected, the seven ministers of Word and Sacrament, plus any tie for the seventh place, identified by the Nominating Committee shall be available for open forums to be established by synod council.
- g. Prior to the convening of the regular or special Synod Assembly at which the bishop is to be elected, the secretary of the synod shall obtain a comparable biographical summary, which must be submitted on a form provided by the secretary by each of the seven ministers identified by the Nominating Committee.
- h. In preparation for the first ballot, the compiled summary of the biographical information on the seven nominees shall be distributed to the voting members of the Synod Assembly.
- i. On the first ballot, the names of the seven ministers, plus any tie for the seventh place, that were identified by the Nominating Committee, shall be listed. In addition, any voting member of the Synod Assembly may submit the name of any minister of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as a nominee. If there is no election on the first ballot, biographical information on the additional nominees shall be obtained and distributed to voting members prior to the casting of the second ballot, except for those who have asked following the first ballot that their names not appear on the second 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, a majority vote is required for election. If no majority is achieved on the first ballot, the two persons receiving the highest number of legal votes shall be entered on the next ballot.
- S9.09.** The result of such 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.
- +S9.12.** Background checks and screening shall be required and completed for persons nominated as synod officers prior to their election, if possible, or as soon as practical after their election. The specific procedures and timing of background checks and screening shall be determined by the Synod Council.

CHAPTER 10. SYNOD COUNCIL

- +S10.01.** The Synod Council, consisting of the four officers of the synod, ~~and~~ 10 to 24 other members, ~~and~~ at least one young adult youth and with a goal of at least one young adult youth, shall be elected by the Synod Assembly.
- a. Each person elected to the Synod Council shall be a voting member of a congregation ~~or a confirmed member of a synod-authorized worshiping community~~ of this synod, with the exception of ministers of on a roster of this synod who reside outside the territory of this synod. The process for election and the term of office when not otherwise provided shall be specified in the bylaws. A member of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, unless otherwise elected as a voting member of the Synod Council, may serve as an advisory member of the Synod Council with voice but not vote.
 - b. The term of office of members of the Synod Council, with the exception of the officers and the youth member, shall be two years.
- +S10.02.** The Synod Council shall be the board of directors of this synod and shall serve as its interim legislative authority between meetings of the Synod Assembly. It may make decisions that are not in conflict with actions taken by the Synod Assembly or that are not precluded by provisions of this constitution or the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- S10.03.** The functions of the Synod Council shall be to:
- a. Exercise trusteeship responsibilities on behalf of this synod.
 - b. Recommend program goals and budgets to the regular meetings of the Synod Assembly.
 - c. Carry out the resolutions of the Synod Assembly.

- d. Provide for an annual review of the roster of ministers of Word and Sacrament and the roster of Ministers of Word and Service, receive and act upon appropriate recommendations regarding those persons whose status is subject to reconsideration and action under the constitution and bylaws of Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and make a report to the Synod Assembly of the Synod Council's actions in this regard.
- e. Issue letters of call to rostered ministers as authorized by Chapter 7 of the constitution and bylaws of Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- f. Fill vacancies until the next regular meeting of the Synod Assembly, except as may otherwise be provided in the constitution or bylaws of this synod, and determine the fact of the incapacity of an officer of this synod.
- g. Report its actions to the regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.
- h. Perform such other functions as are set forth in the bylaws of this synod, or as may be delegated to it by the Synod Assembly.

S10.04. Any proposal to appropriate funds, whether by amendment to the budget or otherwise, which is presented to a meeting of the Synod Assembly without the approval of the Synod Council, shall require a two-thirds vote for adoption.

S10.05. No elected members of the Synod Council shall not receive compensation solely for such their service as council members.

S10.06. No person related to a synod staff member shall be eligible for nomination to or membership on the Synod Council or the following synod committees: Consultation Committee, Committee on Discipline, Audit Committee, or Nominating Committee. For this purpose, a related individual is one who, with respect to the synod employee, is a spouse, parent, son, daughter, sibling, uncle, aunt, niece, nephew, grandparent, grandchild, including corresponding members of blended families and in-laws (parent, son, daughter, or sibling of a spouse, spouse of a sibling, or the parent or sibling of the spouse of a sibling).

S10.0607. If a member of the Synod Council ceases to meet the requirements of the position to which he or she was elected, the office filled by such member shall at once become vacant.

S10.0607.01. Upon two successive absences that have not been excused by the bishop or the vice president, a member's position shall be declared vacant by the secretary of this synod.

S10.0607.02. The Synod Council shall be responsible for filling vacancies on the Synod Council caused by either S10.06. or S10.06.01. If the vacancy is a member nominated by a conference, the Executive Committee of the conference shall be the nominating body on behalf of the Conference Assembly.

S10.0708. The composition of the Synod Council, the number of its members, and the

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

- S10.0708.01.** The Synod Council shall consist of:
- a. The four officers of the synod.
 - b. One minister of Word and Sacrament and/or minister of Word and Service and one lay person from each conference nominated at the Conference Assembly and elected by the Synod Assembly. The terms of conference representatives shall be two years, with term of office arranged so that half of the terms expire annually. Each representative shall be eligible for two consecutive re-elections.
 - c. Each youth member of the Synod Council shall be a voting member, elected by the Synod Assembly for a one-year term and eligible for two consecutive re-elections.
 - d. Each young adult member of the Synod Council shall be a voting member, elected by the Synod Assembly for a two-year term and eligible for two consecutive re-elections.
 - e. Two lay representatives who are persons of color and/or whose primary language is other than English. These representatives shall be elected by the Synod Assembly for a two- year term. Each representative shall be eligible for two consecutive re-elections.
- S10.0708.02.** Terms of office for the Synod Council representatives will begin immediately after their election at the Synod Assembly.
- S10.0708.03.** There shall be at least three meetings a year.
- S10.0708.04.** The Synod Council or the Bishop may appoint additional task forces or committees as it deems necessary.
- S10.0708.05.** Chairpersons of the synod women's, men's, and youth auxiliaries, if any, shall be non-voting members of the Synod Council.
- S10.0809.** *Robert's Rules of Order*, latest edition, shall govern parliamentary procedure of all meetings of the Synod Council.
- +S10.0809.01.** To the extent permitted by Minnesota state law, meetings of the Synod Council and its committees may be held through electronic means such as the Internet or by telephone, as long as there is an opportunity for simultaneous aural communication or its equivalent, electronically or by telephone conference and To the extent permitted by state law, notice of all meetings provided electronically.

CHAPTER 11. BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

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

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

- S11.01.01.** The following mandated committees shall be appointed or elected as indicated:
- a. **Executive Committee.** This committee shall consist of the four officers of this synod and three other members of the Synod Council, two ministers of Word and Sacrament and/or ministers of Word and Service and one lay person, as elected by the Synod Council.
- S11.01.02.** Terms for persons elected or appointed to fill an unexpired term for any synod organizational unit shall be counted as a full term of service only if the unexpired portion is more than one-half the term.
- +S11.02.** The **Consultation Committee** of this synod shall consist of at least six persons and not more than 12 persons, of whom half shall be rostered ministers and half shall be lay persons, who shall each be elected by the Synod Assembly for a term of six years without consecutive re-election. The functions of the Consultation Committee are set forth in Chapter 20 of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* and in Chapter 17 of this constitution. The size of the Consultation Committee, in accord with this provision, shall be defined in this synod's bylaws.
- S11.02.01.** The Consultation Committee shall be consist of at least six persons and not more than 12 persons, of whom three half shall be ministers of Word and Sacrament rostered ministers and three half shall be lay persons.
- +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.
- S11.04.01.** The **Mutual Ministry Committee** shall consist of five persons, appointed by the Executive Committee of the Synod Council to provide support and counsel to the bishop and all other persons employed by this synod. The term for each member shall be for three years and terms shall be arranged so that there is some continuity on the committee. This committee shall seek to give

encouragement by its concern for the spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being of the bishop and all other persons employed by this synod. It will offer support when personal or pastoral stress is being experienced. It will allow for open communication concerning attitudes and conditions within this synod.

- +S11.05.** The **Audit Committee** of this synod shall consist of three to six persons, none of whom is a member of the synod staff. Up to half of the committee members may be Synod Council members. The Audit Committee members shall be elected by the Synod Council for a term of three years and be eligible for re-election to a second consecutive three-year term. The terms of the Audit Committee members shall be staggered. The Audit Committee shall be responsible for assisting the Synod Council in fulfilling its general oversight of the synod's accounting, financial reporting, internal control systems, and external audit processes as provided in +S15.31.
- S11.06.** There shall be a **Candidacy Committee** which shall:
- a. Consist of one person from each conference elected at the Conference Assembly plus three persons appointed by the Synod Council for a term of six years eligible for one consecutive re-election. At least one of the members of the committee shall be filled by a person of color or whose primary language is other than English.
 - b. Be responsible for:
 - 1) Recruitment and preparation for professional leadership.
 - 2) Recommendations for certification of ministers of Word and Sacrament and of ministers of Word and Service.
- A candidate meeting with the Candidacy Committee may request that his or her pastor meet with the committee as appropriate.
- S11.07.** This synod shall have **Conference Deans** who are elected as described in S12.01.52.
- S11.07.01.** Each **Conference Dean** shall be a minister of Word and Sacrament and/or minister of Word and Service from each conference, elected at the conference assembly, for a term of three years, eligible for one consecutive re-election. Terms shall begin immediately following election at the conference assembly.
- S11.07.02.** The **Conference Deans** shall be convened by the bishop and have the responsibility to provide pastoral care and leadership within the conference.
- +S11.11.** This synod shall in its bylaws or by continuing resolution establish a process to ensure that the members of its synod committees and other organizational units will be persons possessing the necessary knowledge and competence to be effective members of such units, and to meet the requirements of +S6.04. With the exception of ministers on the rosters of this synod who reside outside the territory of this synod, each member of a committee of this synod, or any other organizational unit created by this synod, shall be a voting member of a congregation **or a confirmed member of a synod-authorized worshiping community** of this synod.

S11.12. Synod Ministry Committees

The Synod Council or bishop may endorse additional committees to help fulfill the synod's mission statement, as is necessary.

CHAPTER 12. CONFERENCES, CLUSTERS, COALITIONS, AREA SUBDIVISIONS, AND NETWORKS

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

S12.01.10. Conferences

S12.01.11. The congregations of this synod shall be grouped into the following eight conferences:

- a. Prairie Rose Conference
- b. Spirit Lake Conference
- c. Fargo Conference
- d. Grafton Conference
- e. Grand Forks Conference
- f. Jamestown Conference
- g. Mayville Conference
- h. Wahpeton Conference

S12.01.12. The boundaries of the respective conferences shall be set forth in the diagram, attached as Exhibit A, which is hereby incorporated by reference into these bylaws.

S12.01.13. Where a minor fraction of the multiple-congregation parish is situated outside the otherwise defined boundaries of the conference within which the major fraction lies, the territory of such conference shall be understood as embracing the entirety of said parish. The number of congregations shall be the governing factor in determining the majority or minority. If the number of congregations is equally divided, the conference alignment shall be in the conference with the congregation of greater baptized membership.

S12.01.14. The pastor of each multiple-congregation parish shall be a member of the conference to which the parish is assigned.

S12.01.15. Any congregation desiring a change in conference affiliation shall make application to the Synod Council stating the reasons for its request. The Synod Council shall be authorized to take such action which seems to be in the best interests of the congregation, the conference, and the synod.

S12.01.20. Goals and Objectives of the Conference

S12.01.21. Each conference may determine its own goals and objectives that foster the mission of the church in all its expressions. Such goals and objectives may include to:

- a. Study the Holy Scriptures and Christian doctrine and promote

- such study within the congregations.
 - b. Quicken and deepen the spiritual life of clergy and laity.
 - c. Cultivate Christian fellowship.
 - d. Discuss methods of parish administration and the solution of parish problems.
 - e. Transact business matters relating to the congregational work of the conference.
 - f. Deliberate on the work and life of the Church and make them more effective within the congregations.
 - g. Support the total program of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and this synod.
 - h. Foster joint efforts in nurture and service which advance the purpose to which the congregations are committed, both within and across conference and synod boundaries.
 - i. Serve as a working unit of this synod for the purpose of planning, promoting and implementing the mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- S12.01.22.** This synod shall strongly encourage clusters and coalitions between congregations in and beyond conference lines.
- S12.01.23.** The conference structure and operation shall be subject to review by the Synod Council.
- S12.01.24.** A conference may adopt rules and regulations not in conflict with the constitution and bylaws of this synod.
- S12.01.25.** Each conference may, with the approval of the Executive Committee of the Synod Council, have its own treasury and receive and disburse funds for the purposes consistent with the objectives of the conference.
- S12.01.30. Conference Council**
- S12.01.31.** Each conference shall function through a conference council which provides for the participation of ministers under call, other professional church workers, and members of the congregational councils.
- S12.01.32.** Voting members of the conference council shall be:
- a. All ministers of Word and Sacrament and ministers of Word and Service serving under call in the conference,
 - b. members of the congregational councils or their designee (as appointed by the council),
 - c. Officers of the conference,
 - d. Synod Authorized Ministers serving under contract in the conference,
 - e. Members elected by the assembly to churchwide or synod boards who reside in the conference; and
 - f. Chairpersons of the conference women's, men's and youth auxiliaries, if any.
- S12.01.33.** Proxy and absentee voting shall not be permitted in any business of the conference.

- S12.01.36.** Meetings of the conference council are open to all members of all congregations in the conference.
- S12.01.37.** The conference council shall encourage and assist ministers of Word and Sacrament to form an association for the purposes of continuing theological education and mutual encouragement and assistance in the practice of their pastoral office.
- S12.01.38.** The conference council shall encourage and assist ministers of Word and Service and lay church staff workers to form an association for their professional development, mutual encouragement and more effectiveness in their respective offices.
- S12.01.40. Meetings of the Conference Council**
- S12.01.41.** Conference councils shall meet at least annually, to conduct the elections and nominations within the conference as required in 12.01.51., 12.01.52., 12.01.53., and 12.01.54.
- S12.01.42.** The bishop of the synod or his or her appointee shall be invited to attend the annual meeting of the conference council.
- S12.01.44.** *Robert's Rules of Order*, latest edition, shall govern parliamentary procedures of the conference council.
- S12.01.50. Elections and Officers**
- S12.01.51.** Each conference shall nominate, for election by the Synod Assembly, one Minister of Word and Sacrament and/or minister of Word and Service and one lay representative to the Synod Council for a two-year term, eligible for two consecutive re-elections. Term of office shall begin immediately following election at the Synod Assembly.
- S12.01.52.** Each conference shall elect a Dean and representative to the candidacy committee as terms expire and vacancies occur. They shall also recommend a member from their conference to the Synod Nominating Committee, for approval by the Synod Council (see S9.03).
- S12.01.53.** As directed by the Synod Council, the annual meeting of the conference shall include nominating voting members to the Churchwide Assembly. Those nominated require formal election by the Synod Assembly.
- S12.01.54.** The conference council at its assembly shall elect the following officers: president, vice president, and secretary-treasurer. Length of term shall be three years and officers shall be eligible for one consecutive re-election. Two of the offices are to be filled by lay persons. Terms shall be arranged so that one-third of the officers' terms expire each year. Term of office shall begin immediately following election at the assembly.
- S12.01.55. Duties of Officers**
- a. The president shall:

- 1) convene and preside at the conference council meetings and the conference executive committee;
 - 2) give leadership to the conference; and
 - 3) make a written annual report to the bishop of this synod, including an abstract of the proceedings of the conference, stating also the condition and needs of the church within its boundaries.
- b. The vice president shall:
- 1) conduct meetings of the conference council and conference executive committee if the president is unable to preside; and
 - 2) perform other functions assigned by the conference council.
- c. The secretary-treasurer shall:
- 1) take minutes at conference council and executive committee meetings;
 - 2) be responsible for conference communications; and
 - 3) if applicable, maintain the conference treasury.

S12.01.56. The three officers together with the two conference representatives to the Synod Council and the conference dean shall form the executive committee. The conference council may add additional members to the executive committee as deemed necessary.

S12.01.57. In the event of a vacancy in the office of conference president, the conference vice president shall act in that capacity until the next meeting of the conference council when a successor shall be elected for the unexpired term.

S12.01.58. In the event of a vacancy in the office of vice president, secretary-treasurer, conference dean, or representative to the nominating committee or candidacy committee, the conference executive committee shall appoint a person or persons to fulfill the duties until the next meeting of the conference council when a successor shall be elected for the unexpired term.

S12.01.59. In the event of a vacancy in the conference representative to Synod Council, the Conference Executive Committee, on behalf of the Conference Assembly, shall nominate a person to fill the unexpired term. Election shall be by the Synod Council, on behalf of the Synod Assembly.

S12.01.60. If a minister of Word and Sacrament member of the conference executive committee moves out of the conference or ceases to be a member in good standing on the roster of the conference, or if a lay person ceases to be a voting member of a congregation of the conference, the office filled by either member shall at once become vacant.

CHAPTER 13. CONGREGATIONS

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

- a. **New Congregations.** A congregation newly formed by this church and

any congregation seeking recognition and reception by this church shall:

- 1) Accept the criteria for recognition and reception as a congregation of this church, fulfill the functions of the congregation, and accept the governance provisions as provided in Chapter 9 of the constitution and bylaws of this church.
 - 2) Adopt governing documents that include fully and without alterations the Preamble, Chapter 1, where applicable, and all provisions of Chapters 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 15, 16, 17, 18, and 19 in the *Model Constitution for Congregations* consistent with requirements of the constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of this church. Bylaws and continuing resolutions, appropriate for inclusion in these chapters and not in conflict with these required provisions in the *Model Constitution for Congregations*, the constitution of this synod, or the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, may be adopted as described in Chapters 16 and 18 of the *Model Constitution for Congregations*.
 - 3) Accept the commitments expected of all congregations of this church as stated in *C6.01., *C6.02., and *C6.03., of the *Model Constitution for Congregations*.
- b. **Congregations from another church body.** If a congregation is a member of another church body, the leadership of the congregation first should consult with the appropriate authorities of that church body before taking action to leave its current church body. After such consultation, leaders of the congregation should contact the ELCA synod bishop or staff where the congregation is located. The synod bishop or synod staff where the transferring or independent congregation is located shall confer with the congregation to assure its understanding and acceptance of commitment to and affiliation with this church.
- c. **Recognition and reception.** Recognition and reception of additional congregations into this church of transferring or independent congregations by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is based upon the judgment of the synod that the congregations satisfy the criteria of 9.21. and 9.25. 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.
- 1) Recognition and reception of congregations newly formed by this church is accomplished by action of the Synod Council.
 - 2) Recognition and reception of transferring or independent congregations is accomplished by the action of the Synod Assembly upon the recommendation of the Synod Council.
 - a. If a congregation is a member of another church body, the leadership of the congregation first should consult with the appropriate authorities of that church body before taking action to leave its current church body. After such consultation, leaders of the congregation should contact the synod bishop or synod staff in this church where the congregation is located.

b. The synod bishop or synod staff where the transferring or independent congregation is located shall confer with the congregation to assure its understanding and acceptance of commitment to and affiliation with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

- +S13.02.** It shall be the responsibility of each congregation of this synod to elect from among its voting members laypersons to serve as members of the Synod Assembly as well as persons to represent it at meetings of any conference, cluster, coalition, or other area subdivision of which it is a member. Normatively, congregations should hold elections prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly. The number of persons to be elected by each congregation and other qualifications shall be as prescribed in guidelines established by this synod.
- S13.02.01.** Voting representation shall be determined pursuant to +S7.21.
- S13.11.** When a rostered minister resigns, the Congregation Council shall receive the letter of resignation, report it to the congregation, and at once notify the bishop of this synod.
- S13.12.** A congregation under financial obligation to its former rostered minister shall make satisfactory settlement of the obligation before calling a successor.
- +S13.20.** A congregation considering a relocation shall confer with the bishop of the synod in which it is territorially located and the appropriate unit of the churchwide organization before any steps are taken leading to such action. The approval of the Synod Council shall be received before any such action is effected.
- +S13.21.** A congregation considering development of an additional site to be used regularly for worship shall confer with the bishop of the synod in which it is territorially located and the appropriate unit of the churchwide organization before any steps are taken leading to such action.
- +S13.22.** Each congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America within the territory of this synod, except those which are in partnership with the Slovak Zion Synod, shall establish and maintain a relationship with this synod.
- +S13.23.** Provision 9.71. of the constitution of this church shall govern the relationship of this synod and a congregation of this synod regarding the property of the congregation. This synod may transfer or convey property to a congregation of the synod, subject to restrictions accepted by the congregation, including provision that if the Synod Council, in its sole and exclusive discretion, determines (1) that the property is not being used to serve the mission and ministry needs of this church, or (2) that the congregation has transferred, encumbered, mortgaged, or in any way burdened or impaired any right, title, or interest in the property without the prior approval of the Synod Council, then title to the property shall revert to the synod, and the congregation, upon written demand, shall reconvey the property to the synod.

- +S13.24.** The Synod Council, itself or through trustees appointed by it, may take charge and control of the property of a congregation of this synod to hold, manage, and convey the same on behalf of this synod, if any of the following apply:
- a. The congregation has disbanded, ceased to worship, or otherwise ceased to exist as a congregation.
 - b. The congregation has abandoned its property.
 - c. The remaining members of the congregation decide that it is no longer possible to function as a congregation or that they are unable to provide required governance.
 - d. The Synod Council determines that the membership of a congregation has become so scattered or so diminished in numbers that it cannot provide required governance or that it has become impractical for the congregation to fulfill the purposes for which it was organized.
 - e. The Synod Council determines that it is necessary for this synod to protect and preserve the congregation's property from waste and deterioration.
- The congregation shall have the right to appeal any such decision to the next Synod Assembly.

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

S13.30. Discipline

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

S13.40. Synod-authorized Worshiping Communities and Outreach Ministries

S13.41. Authorized worshiping Worshiping communities and outreach ministries, authorized by the synod and acknowledged under criteria, policies, and procedures approved by the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, shall accept and adhere to the Confession of Faith and Statement of Purpose of this church, shall be served by leadership under the criteria of this church, and shall be subject to the discipline of this church.

CHAPTER 14. ROSTERED MINISTERS

+S14.10. Ministers of Word and Sacrament

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

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

- a. Every minister of Word and Sacrament shall:

- 1) preach the Word;
 - 2) administer the sacraments;
 - 3) conduct public worship;
 - 4) provide pastoral care;
 - 5) seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel;
 - 6) impart knowledge of this church and its wider ministry 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, **proclaiming God's love for the world**, advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, and embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations.
- b. Each pastor with a congregational call shall, within the congregation:
- 1) offer instruction, confirm, marry, visit the sick and distressed, and bury the dead;
 - 2) relate to all schools and organizations 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*.

- S14.13.** The pastor shall:
- a. keep accurate records of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, communicants, members received, members dismissed, or members excluded from the congregation,
 - b. submit a summary of such statistics annually to this synod, and
 - c. 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. Interim pastors shall not be required to hold membership in the congregation/parish in which they serve.
- 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 this synod at least 90 days prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.
- +S14.16.** When a congregation of this church desires to call a pastor or a candidate for the ministry of Word and Sacrament of this church:
- a. Each congregation of this synod shall consult the bishop of this synod

before taking any steps leading to the extending of a call to a prospective pastor.

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

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

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

- a. The call of a congregation, when accepted by a pastor, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment which shall be terminated only by the pastor's death or, following consultation with the synod bishop, for any of the following reasons:
 - 1) mutual agreement to terminate the call or the completion of a call for a specific term;
 - 2) resignation of the pastor, which shall become effective, unless otherwise agreed, no later than 30 days after the date on which it was submitted;
 - 3) inability to conduct the pastoral office effectively in that congregation in view of local conditions;
 - 4) inability to conduct the pastoral office effectively in view of disability or incapacity of the pastor;
 - 5) suspension of the pastor through discipline for more than three months;
 - 6) resignation or removal of the pastor from the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church;
 - 7) termination of the relationship between this church and the congregation;
 - 8) dissolution of the congregation or the termination of a parish arrangement; or
 - 9) suspension of the congregation through discipline for more than six months.
- b. When allegations of disability or incapacity of the pastor under paragraph a.4) above, or ineffective conduct of the pastoral office under paragraph a.3) above have come to the attention of the bishop of this synod,
 - 1) the bishop, who has sole discretion, may investigate such conditions personally together with a committee of two rostered

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

+S14.19. Ministers of Word and Sacrament shall respect the integrity of the ministry of congregations which they do not serve and shall not exercise ministerial

functions therein unless invited to do so by the pastor, or if there is no duly called pastor, then by the interim pastor in consultation with the Congregation Council.

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

 - a. installation in another call;
 - b. approval of request for change in roster status;
- +S14.22.** The pastor shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to a former congregation before:

 - a. installation in another call;
 - b. approval of a request for change in roster status.
- +S14.23** During service to a congregation, an interim pastor shall have the rights and duties in the congregation of a regularly called pastor. The interim pastor may delegate the same in part to an interim supply pastor with the consent of the bishop of this synod. The interim pastor and any rostered minister who may assist shall refrain from exerting influence in the selection of a pastor. Upon completion of service, the interim pastor shall certify to the bishop of this synod that the congregation records, for the period for which the interim pastor was responsible, are in order.
- +S14.24.** With the approval of the synod bishop expressed in writing, which sets forth a clear statement of the purpose to be served by such a departure from the normal rule of permanency of the call as expressed in +S14.18., a congregation may call a pastor for a specific term. Details of such calls shall be in writing, setting forth the purpose and conditions involved. Prior to the completion of a term, the bishop of this synod or a representative of the bishop shall meet with the pastor and representatives of the congregation for a review of the call. Such call may also be terminated before its expiration in accordance with the provisions of +S14.18.
- S14.25.** All ministers of Word and Sacrament under a call shall attend meetings of the Synod Assembly, and the pastors of congregations shall also attend the meetings of the conference, cluster, coalition, or other area subdivision to which the congregation belongs.
- +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, **proclaiming God's love for the world**, advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, and embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations;
- d. Equip the baptized for ministry in God's world that affirms the gifts of all people;
- e. Encourage mutual relationships that invite participation and accompaniment of others in God's mission;
- f. Practice stewardship that reflects God's gift of time, talents, and resources;
- g. Be grounded in a gathered community for ongoing diaconal formation;
- h. Share knowledge of this church and its wider ministry of the gospel, and advocate for the work of all expressions of this church; and
- i. Identify and encourage qualified persons to prepare for ministry of the gospel.

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

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

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

- a. Each congregation of this synod shall consult the bishop of this synod before taking any steps leading to the extending of a call to a prospective minister of Word and Service.
- b. For issuance of a letter of call to a minister of Word and Service or candidate by a congregation of this synod in accord with ELCA constitutional provision 7.71, a two-thirds vote shall be required of members of the congregation present and voting at a meeting regularly called for the purpose of issuing such a call.
- c. When the congregation has voted to issue a call to a prospective minister of Word and Service, the letter of call shall be submitted to the bishop of this synod for the bishop's signature.

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

the congregation issuing the call, an additional 15 days may be granted to respond to a letter of call.

+S14.43.

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

- a. The call of a congregation, when accepted by a minister of Word and Service, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment which shall be terminated only by the deacon's death or, following consultation with the synod bishop, for any of the following reasons:
 - 1) mutual agreement to terminate the call or the completion of a call for a specific term;
 - 2) resignation of the minister of Word and Service, which shall become effective, unless otherwise agreed, no later than 30 days after the date on which it was submitted;
 - 3) inability to conduct the office effectively in that congregation in view of local conditions;
 - 4) inability to conduct the office effectively in view of disability or incapacity of the minister of Word and Service;
 - 5) suspension of the minister of Word and Service through discipline for more than three months;
 - 6) resignation or removal of the minister of Word and Service from the roster of ministers of Word and Service of this church;
 - 7) termination of the relationship between this church and the congregation;
 - 8) dissolution of the congregation or the termination of a parish arrangement; or
 - 9) suspension of the congregation through discipline for more than six months.
- b. When allegations of disability or incapacity of the minister of Word and Service under paragraph a.4) above, or ineffective conduct of the ministry of Word and Service under paragraph a.3) above, have come to the attention of the bishop of this synod,
 - 1) the bishop, who has sole discretion, may investigate such conditions personally together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson, or
 - 2) when such allegations have been brought to the synod's attention by an official recital of allegations by the Congregation Council or by a petition signed by at least one-third of the voting members of the congregation, the bishop personally shall investigate such conditions together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson.
- c. In case of alleged disability or incapacity under paragraph a.4) above, the bishop's committee shall obtain and document competent medical opinion concerning the minister of Word and Service's condition. When a disability or incapacity is evident to the committee, the bishop of this synod may declare the position vacant. When the position is declared vacant, the Synod Council shall list the deacon on the roster of ministers of Word and Service with disability status. Upon resumption of the ability to conduct the office effectively, the bishop shall take steps to enable

- the minister of Word and Service to resume the ministry, either in the congregation last served or in another appropriate call.
- d. In the case of alleged local difficulties that imperil the effective functioning of the congregation under paragraph a.3) above, the bishop's committee shall endeavor to hear from all concerned persons, after which the bishop together with the committee shall present their recommendations first to the minister of Word and Service and then to the congregation. The recommendations of the bishop's committee address whether the minister of Word and Service's call should come to an end and, if so, may suggest appropriate severance arrangements. The committee may also propose other actions that should be undertaken by the congregation and by the minister of Word and Service, if appropriate. If the minister of Word and Service and congregation agree to carry out such recommendations, no further action need be taken by the synod.
 - e. If either party fails to assent to the recommendations of the bishop's committee concerning the minister of Word and Service's call, the congregation may dismiss the minister of Word and Service only at a legally called meeting after consultation with the bishop, either (a) by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee did not recommend termination of the call, or (b) by a majority vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee recommended termination of the call.
 - f. If, in the course of proceedings described in paragraph c. or paragraph d. above, the bishop's committee concludes that there may be grounds for disciplinary action, the committee shall make recommendations concerning disciplinary action in accordance with the provisions of this church's constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.
- +S14.44.** Ministers of Word and Service shall respect the integrity of the ministry of congregations which they do not serve and shall not exercise ministerial functions therein unless invited to do so by the Congregation Council.
- +S14.45.** The minister of Word and Service shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to a former congregation before:
- a. installation in another call, or
 - b. approval of a request for change in roster status.
- +S14.46.** With the approval of the synod bishop expressed in writing, which sets forth a clear statement of the purpose to be served by such a departure from the normal rule of permanency of the call as expressed in +S14.43., a congregation may call a minister of Word and Service for a specific term. Details of such calls shall be in writing, setting forth the purpose and conditions involved. Prior to the completion of a term, the bishop of this synod or a representative of the bishop shall meet with the minister of Word and Service and representatives of the congregation for a review of the call. Such call may also be terminated before its expiration in accordance with the provisions of +S14.43.

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

CHAPTER 15. FINANCIAL MATTERS

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

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

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

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

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

S15.14. Except when such procedure would jeopardize current operations, a reserve amounting to no more than 25 percent of the sum of the amounts scheduled in the next year's budget for regular distribution to synod causes shall be carried forward annually for disbursement in the following year in the interest of making possible a more even flow of income to such causes. The exact number of dollars to be held in reserve shall be determined by the Synod Council.

S15.21. No appeal to congregations of this or any other synod of the Evangelical

Lutheran Church in America for the raising of funds shall be conducted by congregations or organizations related to or affiliated with this synod without the consent of the Synod Assembly or the Synod Council.

- +S15.31.** This synod shall arrange to have an annual audit of its financial records conducted by a certified public accountant firm recommended by the synod Audit Committee and approved by the Synod Council. The audited annual financial report shall be submitted by this synod to the churchwide Office of the Treasurer and to the congregations of this synod.
- +S15.32.** This synod shall maintain adequate, continuous insurance coverage in accordance with standards recommended by the churchwide organization. Insurance programs offered or endorsed by the churchwide organization shall be deemed to fulfill this obligation.

CHAPTER 16. INDEMNIFICATION

- +S16.01.** Subject to the limitations and duties imposed by law, each person who is or was made or threatened to be made a party to any proceeding by reason of the present or former capacity of that person as a Synod Council member, officer, employee, or committee member of this synod shall be indemnified against all costs and expenses incurred by that person in connection with the proceeding. Indemnification of any person by reason of that person's capacity as a director, officer, employee, or committee member of any other organization, regardless of its form or relationship to this synod, is subject to the provisions of +S16.02.
 - a. the term, "proceeding," means a threatened, pending, or completed lawsuit, whether civil or criminal, an administrative⁷ or investigative matter, arbitration, mediation, alternative dispute resolution, or any other similar legal or governmental action. Except as otherwise required by law, the term "proceeding," does not include (a) any action by this synod against the individual seeking indemnification, or (b) subject to +S16.04., a disciplinary hearing or related process described in Chapter 20 of the *Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*.
 - b. The term "indemnification" includes reimbursements and advances of costs and expenses for judgements, penalties, fines, settlements, excise taxes, reasonable attorneys' fees, disbursements, and similar required expenditures.
- +S16.02.** Whenever a person who, while a Synod Council member, officer, committee member, or employee of this synod, is or was serving at the request of this synod (or whose duties in that position involve or involved service in the capacity of) a director, officer, partner, trustee, employee, or agent of another organization, is or was made or threatened to be made a party to a proceeding by reason of such capacity, then such person shall be entitled to indemnification only if (a) the Synod Council has established a process for determining whether a person serving in the capacity described in this section shall be entitled to indemnification in any specific case, and (b) that process has been applied in making a specific determination that such

person is entitled to indemnification.

- +S16.03.** This synod may purchase and maintain insurance on behalf of itself or any person entitled to indemnification pursuant to this chapter against any liability asserted against and incurred by this synod or by such other person in or arising from a capacity described in +S16.01. or +S16.02.
- +S16.04.** When written charges against a rostered minister of this church are made in disciplinary proceedings under Chapter 20 of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* by the synod bishop or written charges against a congregation are made in disciplinary proceedings by the Synod Council or the synod bishop, and the discipline hearing committee determines that no discipline shall be imposed, then if such determination is not reversed or set aside on appeal, indemnification shall be made by the synod to the accused for reasonable attorney's fees and other reasonable expenses related to the defense of the charges. The determination of the reasonableness of such fees and expenses shall be made by the Synod Council.

CHAPTER 17. CONSULTATION AND ADJUDICATION

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

party or parties may petition the synod bishop and the Executive Committee of the Synod Council requesting a consultation after informing the other affected parties of their intent to do so. In this case the decision of the Executive Committee shall prevail, except that, upon the motion of a member of the Synod Council, the decision shall be referred to the Synod Council for final action.

+S17.10. Adjudication in a Congregation

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

CHAPTER 18. AMENDMENTS, BYLAWS AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS

+S18.10. Amendments to Constitution

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

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

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

- a. Introduced with the support of at least **50** voting members and having been approved by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting at a regular meeting of the Synod Assembly, an amendment may be adopted unchanged by a two-thirds vote at the next regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.

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

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

+S18.20. Amendments to Bylaws

- +S18.21.** This synod may adopt bylaws not in conflict with this constitution or with the constitution and bylaws of the churchwide organization. This synod may amend its bylaws at any meeting of the Synod Assembly by a two-thirds vote of voting members of the assembly present and voting. Newly adopted bylaws and amendments to existing bylaws shall be reported to the secretary of this church.

+S18.30. Amendments to Continuing Resolutions

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

CHAPTER 19. AGENCIES AND INSTITUTIONS

- S19.01.** The Eastern North Dakota Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, singularly or together with other synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as may be associated with it, recognizes and supports the institutions specified in the bylaws.

- S19.01.01.** The Eastern North Dakota Synod recognizes, supports, and cooperates with other institutions and organizations as partners in ministry and mission.
- a. All long-term health care facilities located within this synod which are affiliated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America are recognized ministry partners.
 - 1) Congregations are encouraged to affiliate with and support financially and spiritually the facilities in their area.
 - 2) When requested or mandated, congregational representation for governance will be provided.
 - b. Lutheran Social Services of North Dakota (LSSND) is a recognized ministry partner.
 - 1) Representation as necessary will be provided for the governance of LSSND as provided in its Chapters of Incorporation and Bylaws.
 - 2) Spiritual and financial support will be provided collectively by this synod as determined by this synod.
 - 3) Congregations are encouraged to individually affiliate with and provide financial and spiritual support to LSSND.

- c. Lutheran Outdoor Ministries are recognized ministry partners.
 - 1) There are two recognized bible camps within the synod: Red Willow Ministries and Park River Bible Camp.
 - 2) As mandated by articles of incorporation, congregations will provide necessary representation for governance of Red Willow Ministries and Park River Bible Camp.
 - 3) Congregations are further encouraged to individually affiliate with, promote, and provide financial and spiritual support to the Lutheran Outdoor Ministries located within this synod and nearby.
- d. Lutheran Campus Ministries are recognized ministry partners.
 - 1) The synod provides financial support, spiritual support, leadership support, and governance support to Crossroads at North Dakota State University and Christus Rex at University of North Dakota.
 - 2) Congregations are encouraged to affiliate with, promote, and provide financial and spiritual support to these ministries and other Lutheran Campus Ministries throughout the Church.
- e. Oak Grove Lutheran School is a recognized partner in ministry.
 - 1) As requested or mandated, the synod will provide representation and governance assistance.
 - 2) Congregations are encouraged to provide both spiritual and financial support to Oak Grove Lutheran School.
- f. Lutheran Colleges in Region 3 and 5 are recognized ministry partners.
 - 1) The synod will promote and provide spiritual support to ELCA colleges.
 - 2) As requested or mandated, the synod will provide representation and governance assistance.
 - 3) Congregations are encouraged to provide promotional, spiritual, and financial support to Lutheran Colleges in Regions 3 and 5.
- g. Luther Seminary is a recognized ministry partner.
 - 1) The synod will provide financial and spiritual support to Luther Seminary.
 - 2) As mandated by the articles of incorporation, the synod provides representation to the Board of Directors and Foundation Board of Trustees of Luther Seminary.
 - 3) Congregations are encouraged to provide promotional, spiritual, and financial support to Luther Seminary.

