

**University Lutheran Church**  
**October 15, 2017 Forum – Proposed Amendments to ULC Constitution**

Council recommends changes to ULC constitution to conform with ELCA model constitution  
Updates ULC constitution  
Permits updating ULC bylaws and continuing resolutions (none on the agenda)

General

- Replaces: ELCA with Evangelical Lutheran Church
- Adds: Congregation before Council (i.e., “Congregation Council”)
- Re-numbers chapter references as appropriate
- Replaces: “this” congregation to “the” congregation
- Changes: “church-wide” to “churchwide”
- Changes “Northwest” to “North/West”

**Ch. 1 – Name/Incorporation**

- Drops: distinction between Church (capitalized) and church
- Eliminates: “not for profit”

**Ch. 2 – Confession of Faith**

- Replaces: “the Scriptures” with “they”
- Replaces: “Scriptures” with “Scripture”

**Ch. 3 – Nature of the Church**

- Adds: “The church confesses the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church and is resolved to serve Christian unity throughout the world”
- Adds: “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.
- Adds: “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.

**Ch. 4 – Statement of Purpose**

- Replaces: “ministries” with ministry
- Deletes: “ensure the inclusion and involvement of students in the life, governance, and ministry of ULC; minister in particular to people at Michigan State University and other institutions of higher learning in the greater Lansing area”
- Deletes: “stewardship of time, ability, possessions”
- Refers to “Council” as “Congregation Council”
- Adds: [Such descriptions shall be contained in continuing resolutions in the section on the Congregation Committees.]
- Adds: “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."

#### **Ch. 5 – Powers of the Congregation**

- Replaces "Congregational" with "Congregation"
- Deletes: The governing body of this congregation shall be the University Lutheran Church Council hereafter referred to as "Council."
- Replaces "associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers" with "minister of Word and Service"
- Replaces "applicable policy" with "constitution"
- Replaces "an endowment fund(s)" with "a mission endowment fund"
- Replaces "ministry" with "mission work"

#### **Ch. 6 – Church Affiliation**

- Adds: "These special circumstances are limited either to calling a candidate approved for the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or to contracting for pastoral services with a minister of Word and Sacrament of a church body with which the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America officially has established a relationship of full communion."
- Replaces "desire of the congregation" with "intent"
- Adds: "Such meeting may be held no sooner than 30 days after written notice of the meeting is received by the bishop of the synod, during which time the congregation shall consult with the bishop and the bishop's designees, if any. The times and manner of the consultation shall be determined by the bishop in consultation with the Congregation Council. Unless he or she is a voting member of the congregation, the bishop and the bishop's designees, if any, shall have voice but not vote at the meeting."
- Adds: "attesting that the special meeting was legally called and conducted and certifying the outcome of the vote,"
- Deletes: "at which meeting the bishop of the synod or an authorized representative shall be present."
- Adds: "the bishop" to meeting notice
- Adds: "Unless he or she is a voting member of the congregation, the bishop and the bishop's designees, if any, shall have voice but not vote" at the meeting
- Deletes: "certified"
- Adds: "attesting that the special meeting was legally called and conducted and certifying the outcome of the vote,"
- Adds: "who shall report the termination to the Churchwide Assembly. This congregation shall abide by these covenants by and among the three expressions of this church."

1) Congregations seeking to terminate their relationship with this church which fail or refuse to comply with each of the foregoing provisions in \*C6.05. shall be required to receive Synod Council approval before terminating their membership in this church.

2) Congregations which had been members of the Lutheran Church in America shall be required, in addition to complying with the foregoing provisions in \*C6.05., to receive synodical approval before terminating their membership in this church.

3) Congregations established by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be required, in addition to complying with the foregoing provisions in \*C6.05., to satisfy all financial obligations to this church and receive Synod Council approval before terminating their membership in this church.

h. If this congregation fails to achieve the required two-thirds vote of voting members present at the congregation's first meeting as specified in paragraph a. above, another special meeting to consider termination of relationship with this church may be called no sooner than six months after that first meeting. If this congregation fails to achieve the required two-thirds vote of voting members present at the congregation's second meeting as specified in paragraph d. above, another attempt to consider termination of relationship with this church must follow all requirements of \*C6.05. and may begin no sooner than six months after that second meeting.

- Adds: "and the appropriate unit of the churchwide organization"
- Adds: "If this congregation considers developing an additional site to be used regularly for worship, it shall confer with the bishop of the synod in which it is territorially located and the appropriate unit of the churchwide organization before any steps are taken leading to such action."

#### **Ch. 7 – Property Ownership**

- Adds: "provided the process for termination of relationship in \*C6.05. has been followed."
- Adds: "Notwithstanding the provisions of \*C7.02. and \*C7.03. above, where this congregation has received property from the synod pursuant to a deed or other instrument containing restrictions under provision 9.71.a. of the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, this congregation accepts such restrictions and:

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

b. Shall—upon written demand by the Synod Council, pursuant to †S13.23. of the constitution of the North/West Lower Michigan Synod—reconvey and transfer all right, title, and interest in the property to the synod."

## **Ch. 8 – Membership**

- Adds: “Voting members are confirmed members. Such confirmed members, during the current or preceding calendar year, shall have communed in this congregation and shall have made a contribution of record to this congregation. Members of this congregation who have satisfied these basic standards shall have the privilege of voice and vote at every regular and special meeting of the congregation as well as the other rights and privileges ascribed to voting members by the provisions of this constitution and its bylaws.”
- Adds: [Associate members] “These individuals have all the privileges and duties of membership except voting rights or other rights and privileges ascribed to voting members by the provisions of this constitution and its bylaws.”
- Adds: “Seasonal members are voting members of other ELCA congregations who wish to retain such membership but desire to participate in the life and mission of this congregation, including exercising limited voting rights in this congregation. The Congregation Council may grant seasonal membership to such persons provided that this congregation is a member of a synod where the Synod Council has approved seasonal member voting on its territory. Such seasonal members shall have all the privileges and duties of voting members except that:
  - 1) they shall not be eligible for elected office in, or for membership on the Congregation Council or on a call committee of, this congregation;
  - 2) they shall not have the right to vote on any matter concerning or affecting the call or termination of call of any minister of this congregation;
  - 3) they shall not have the right to vote on any matter concerning or affecting the affiliation of this congregation with the ELCA;
  - 4) they shall not be eligible to serve as voting members from this congregation of the Synod Assembly or the Churchwide Assembly;
  - 5) they shall not, even if otherwise permitted by this congregation, vote by proxy or by absentee ballot; and
  - 6) they shall not, within any two calendar month period, exercise voting rights in this congregation and in the congregation where they remain voting members
- Replaces: “partake in holy communion” with “provisions of this Constitution”
- Adds: “shall remain persons for whom the Church has a continuing pastoral concern”

## **Ch. 9 – Rostered Minister (replaces The Pastor)**

- C9.05 addresses termination of relationship between Minister of Word/Sacrament and the congregation (numerous language “tweaks” for clarity, especially with disability provisions)
- Adds: “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.”
- Adds: “Unless previously agreed upon by the Synod Council, an interim pastor is not available for a regular call to the congregation served.”

- Adds: “In a parish of multiple congregations, the pastor shall hold membership in one of the congregations.”
- C9.15-21 adds new language for call process and termination

**Ch. 10-16 – No Changes**

**Ch. 17 – Discipline of Members and Adjudication**

- Language modification for clarification and updating

**Ch. 18 – Amendments**

- Language modification for clarification and updating

**Ch. 19 – Bylaws**

- Renumbered – no changes

**Ch. 20 – Continuing Resolution**

- Renumbered
- Adds: “The congregation in a legally called meeting or”
- Adds: [no conflict] “with bylaws and constitution”
- Adds: “majority vote of congregation”

**Ch. 21 – Indemnification**

- Adds: “Consistent with the provisions of the laws under which this congregation is incorporated, this congregation may adopt provisions providing indemnification for each person who, by reason of the fact that such person is or was a Congregation Council member, officer, employee, agent, or other member of any committee of this congregation, was or is threatened to be made a party to any threatened, pending, or completed civil, criminal, administrative, arbitration, or investigative proceeding.”
- Adds new section of requirements when congregation is part of a parish.