



## Process for Submission of Congregational Constitution Changes

To expedite and make the process uniform, the following procedure for approval of changes to congregation constitutions has been established by the Synod Legal Committee and approved by the Synod Council:

1. Call and talk with Michael DeNise, Director of Finance and Administration. The number is 704-633-4861
2. The congregation council should acquire the 2022 revision of the Model Constitution for Congregations from the [synod website](#).
3. All starred (\*) items in the Model Constitution for Congregations must be included in the congregation's constitution without omission or change, and asterisks must appear in the congregation's constitution as they are in the Model.
4. Any non-starred items from the current constitution that the congregation wants to be included in its newly revised constitution may be added.
5. The entire constitution with changes so noted should be sent in Microsoft WORD format via email to [mdenise@nclutheran.org](mailto:mdenise@nclutheran.org) at least 30 days prior to the synod council meeting at which it is to be considered. It is suggested that the changes be submitted for approval *after* being voted upon by the church council, but *before* being submitted for congregational vote.
6. The Legal Committee will review the changes and make a recommendation to the Synod Council at its next meeting. Criteria for approval are that:
  - a. The latest edition for the Model Constitution for congregations was used
  - b. All starred items from the Model Constitution for Congregations are included without omission or change, and
  - c. The non-starred items do not conflict with the NC Synod or ELCA Constitutions and Bylaws
  - d. All bylaws and continuing resolutions are in the corresponding chapter, under the amendment they relate to, and are numbered correctly.
7. Written notification of the Synod Council action will be sent to the congregation council.
8. If approved:
  - a. Approval is subject to the congregational vote to approve the constitution exactly as it was approved by the synod council, and
  - b. A copy of the constitution as approved, including the DATE OF THE CONGREGATION'S APPROVAL and DATE OF RATIFICATION will be sent to the synod office to be filed.
  - c. Keep in mind that ratification vote must happen at your annual meeting the first vote to approve may be done at any special called congregation meeting.
9. If not approved:



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- a. The constitution is returned to the congregation council noting the reason(s)
  - b. The congregation council may revise and resubmit the constitution to the synod office for review to begin the process again.
10. If only updating your church's constitution to include changes made by ELCA to the Model Constitution for Congregations at an ELCA assembly, Chris Boerger of the Office of the Secretary has stated the congregation's constitution must be sent to the legal committee for review and gain approval but then only one vote by the congregation is required to accept and ratify. If further local changes are made, the two votes by the congregation to accept and to ratify are required (see 9B).

## Voting to Approve Your Constitution

1. Voting for constitution is done as one document. You should not vote on each change individually
2. To change constitutional amendments 2 votes are required. The initial vote and the ratification vote for all non starred amendments to your constitution.
3. To change a bylaw a single vote is required at either a special called congregational meeting or the annual congregational meeting and those changes take effect immediately unless noted differently in the motion
4. To change a continuing resolution the council may vote to do this and the change takes effect immediately unless noted differently in the motion

## Examples of Placing and Numbering Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions into the Constitution

The following **are examples** of how bylaws and continuing resolutions should ideally be codified within the congregation's constitution:

### (CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISION)

C11.01. The officers of this congregation shall be a president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, an assistant treasurer and a financial secretary.

- a. Duties of the officers shall be specified in the bylaws.
- b. The officers shall be voting members of the congregation.
- c. Officers of this congregation shall serve similar offices of the Congregation Council.

### (BYLAWS)

C11.01.01. The president shall preside at meetings of the congregation and the Congregation Council. In the event of the president's inability to serve, the vice-president shall preside



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C11.01.02. The secretary shall keep accurate minutes of all meetings of the congregation and of the council in a volume provided by the congregation, which shall be preserved permanently in its archives.

C11.01.03. The financial secretary *and assistant financial secretary shall be appointed annually by the Congregation council* and shall receive and keep records of all income from contributing members and other sources.

## (CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISION)

C18.03. *Duties of committees of this congregation shall be specified in the continuing resolutions.*

## (CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS)

*C18.03.A96. The Congregation Council shall see to it that at the end of each year, if there are...*

*C18.03.B96. Education Ministry - This committee shall plan and coordinate the educational activities of this congregation. It shall develop...*

*C18.03.C96. Evangelism - Sharing and spreading the Good News of God's love in Christ is the responsibility of each member of the congregation. This committee shall develop...*

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