



Constitution

Synod of Alberta and the Territories
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

Adopted by Synod Convention, June 14-16, 2018

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ARTICLE I Name and Incorporation

Section 1.

The name of the synod functioning under this constitution shall be The Alberta Synod whose operating name shall be The Synod of Alberta and the Territories of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (hereafter referred to as this synod).

Section 2.

This synod shall be incorporated under the laws of Alberta.

Section 3.

The seal of this synod shall consist of a cross encircled by the words "The Alberta Synod - Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada."

The bishop shall have custody of the seal.

ARTICLE II Territory

The Territory of this synod shall be the province of Alberta plus the Yukon Territory, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut.

ARTICLE III Confession of Faith

Section 1.

This synod confesses the Triune God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit - as the one true God. It proclaims the Father as Creator and Preserver; His Son, Jesus Christ, as Redeemer and Lord; and the Holy Spirit as Regenerator and Sanctifier.

Section 2.

This synod confesses that the Gospel is the revelation of God's saving will and grace in Jesus Christ, which He imparts through Word and Sacrament. Through these means of grace, the Holy Spirit creates believers and unites them with their Lord and with one another in the fellowship of the Holy Christian Church.

Section 3.

This synod confesses the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God, through which God still speaks, and as the only source of the Church's doctrine and the authoritative standard for the faith and life of the Church.

Section 4.

This synod confesses the following symbols, comprising the Book of Concord of 1580, which it subscribes specifically as witnesses to the way in which the Holy Scriptures have been correctly understood and explained and confessed for the sake of the Gospel, namely

- a. the Apostles', the Nicene, and the Athanasian Creeds as the chief confessions of the Christian faith;
- b. the Unaltered Augsburg Confession as its basic formulation of Christian doctrine;
- c. Luther's Small Catechism as a clear summary of Christian doctrine;
- d. the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Luther's Large Catechism, the Smalcald Articles with the Treatise, and the Formula of Concord as further witnesses to the Unaltered Augsburg Confession.

ARTICLE IV Mission

Section 1.

As the regional expression of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (hereafter referred to as this church), in faithfulness to the Lord of the Church, this synod shall facilitate and advance the mission of this church within its territory. Guided and empowered by the Holy Spirit, it shall carry out this mission by shepherding and engaging its congregations, synodically recognized ministries, specialized ministries, and rostered ministers, who proclaim God's Word, build community and bring reconciliation to the world.

Section 2.

The mission of this church, as an expression of the universal Church and as an instrument of the Holy Spirit, is to bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ to people in Canada and around the world through the proclamation of the Word and the administration of the Sacraments and through service in Christ's name.

ARTICLE V Membership

Section 1.

The membership of this synod consists of member congregations and synodically recognized ministries that are recognized by this synod in the manner described in the bylaws of this church. Baptized individuals who are members of a congregation or synodically recognized ministry shall exercise their privileges and responsibilities through participation in the congregation or synodically recognized ministry in which they are members.

Section 2.

This synod shall recognize those congregations on its territory that are recognized by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada and certified to it by the secretary of this church.

Section 3.

Additional congregations may be recognized by this synod acting on behalf of this church in the manner described in the constitution and bylaws of this church.

Section 4.

This synod may revoke its recognition of any congregation or synodically recognized ministry in the manner described in the constitution and bylaws of this church.

ARTICLE VI Congregations

Section 1.

Every congregation which is recognized by this synod shall have a constitution which, in the judgment of the Synod Council, is in harmony with the constitution and bylaws of this church and of this synod.

Section 2.

Representation of this synod to ELCIC Conventions will follow the process outlined in the bylaws of this synod.

Section 3.

Every congregation of this synod shall choose a delegate or delegates to represent it at conventions of this synod in accordance with procedures as defined in the bylaws of this synod. An alternate or alternates may act in the stead of the delegate or delegates in the event of their absence.

Section 4.

The alignment of congregations in pastoral charges shall be subject to approval of Synod Council.

Section 5.

Congregations shall have the right to petition this synod, according to procedures set forth in the bylaws.

Section 6.

The approval of this church or a convention of the synod or of its council shall be required for the solicitation of funds from congregations for institutions, agencies and causes of this church.

Section 7.

When a rostered minister resigns, the congregational council shall receive the resignation, report it to the congregation and notify the bishop of this synod.

Section 8.

In case of strife and division in a congregation, the congregational council shall seek the advice of the bishop of this synod.

Section 9.

A lay member of any congregation who is under discipline by their congregation may appeal to this synod in the manner described in the bylaws of this synod.

Section 10.

A congregation desiring to withdraw from this church shall notify the bishop of this synod. Decision to withdraw must be approved by a two-thirds majority vote at a properly called and conducted meeting and immediately reported to the bishop of this synod. Decision to withdraw shall not be effective until action has been ratified by a two-thirds majority vote of those who were members at the time of the first vote. This subsequently properly called and conducted meeting shall be held not less than 90 days and not more than 150 days after the first vote to withdraw.

Section 11.

A congregation which has ceased to exist or whose membership has so diminished in numbers as to render it impossible or impractical for the congregation to function according to its constitution and bylaws shall, after consultation with any remaining members, be deemed by this synod to be defunct. This synod through the Synod Council shall appoint trustees, including where feasible former members of the congregation, who shall take charge and control of the property of said congregation to hold, manage and convey the same on behalf of this synod.

ARTICLE VII Synodically Recognized Ministries

Section 1.

This synod shall maintain a roster of synodically recognized ministries.

Section 2.

Synodically recognized ministries shall be entitled to representation at conventions of this synod with seat and voice.

Section 3.

The approval of this church or a convention of this synod or of its council shall be required for the solicitation of funds from synodically recognized ministries for institutions, agencies and causes of this church.

Section 4.

A lay member of any synodically recognized ministry who is under discipline by their synodically recognized ministry may appeal to this synod in the manner described in the bylaws of this synod.

ARTICLE VIII Rostered Ministers – Ordained

Section 1.

The synod shall maintain a roster of ordained ministers.

Section 2.

The standards of admission and continuance on the roster of ordained ministers shall be defined in the bylaws of this synod.

Section 3.

An ordained minister shall conduct themselves in accordance with the constitution, bylaws and policies of this synod and of this church.

ARTICLE IX Rostered Ministers - Diaconal

Section 1.

The synod shall maintain a roster of diaconal ministers.

Section 2.

The standards of admission and continuance on the roster of diaconal ministers shall be defined in the bylaws of this synod.

Section 3.

A diaconal minister shall conduct themselves in accordance with the constitution, bylaws and policies of this synod and of this church.

ARTICLE X Full Communion Provisions

Section 1.

Ordered ministers of churches with which this church has a full communion agreement, who are serving in this church under the provisions of that full communion agreement shall have the same rights and privileges as the equivalent order of ministry in this church.

ARTICLE XI Areas

Section 1.

This synod shall be organized into areas whose number and boundaries shall be determined by Synod Council.

Section 2.

The role of the areas shall be defined in the bylaws of this synod.

ARTICLE XII Conventions

Section 1.

The convention of this synod shall be its highest legislative authority.

Section 2.

Conventions of this synod shall be held according to times, policies, and procedures as described in the bylaws of this synod.

ARTICLE XIII Synod Council

Section 1.

Synod Council is the governing body of this synod and shall carry out all normal functions and responsibilities on behalf of this synod in accordance with the constitution, the bylaws and resolutions of this synod in convention.

Section 2.

The council of this synod shall consist of officers and members, all whom shall be members in good standing of congregations or synodically recognized ministries. They shall be elected or appointed according to procedures defined in the bylaws of this synod. Synod Council may appoint a replacement member to fill a vacancy between conventions.

Section 3.

The terms of the elected members shall begin the first day of the third month following election.

Section 4.

The bishop of this synod shall be an ex officio member of Synod Council.

ARTICLE XIV Officers

Section 1.

The officers of this synod shall be the chairperson, the secretary and the treasurer. Two of the three officers shall be lay members of this synod.

Section 2.

The duties of the officers shall be defined in the bylaws of this synod.

Section 3.

The officers shall be elected by the synod convention according to procedures defined in the bylaws of this synod. All officers shall serve until their successors assume office.

Section 4.

Synod Council may appoint a replacement officer to fill a vacancy between conventions.

Section 5.

The terms of officers shall begin no later than the first day of the third full month following election.

Section 6.

The recall or dismissal of an officer of this synod shall follow the procedure set out in the constitution and bylaws of this church.

Section 7.

Synod Council may extend a call to an officer to serve as an assistant in accordance with procedures defined in the bylaws of this synod. Such persons shall be ineligible for membership on Synod Council.

ARTICLE XV The Office of the Bishop

Section 1.

The bishop of this synod shall be a pastor and counselor to all rostered ministers and lay members of this synod, and with the Synod Council, shall be the guardian of the procedures relating to the good standing in the faith, and the welfare of congregations, synodically recognized ministries, specialized ministries, rostered ministers and institutions of this synod.

Section 2.

The bishop of this synod shall be the chief executive officer of this synod, and an ex officio member of all ministry teams and committees of this synod.

Section 3.

The bishop of this synod as the chief executive officer of this synod, has full authority, responsibility and accountability to discharge all duties and obligations of that office as mandated in the constitution, the bylaws and by resolution of Synod Council.

Section 4.

The authority to elect and call a bishop shall rest with this synod at a regular convention or a special convention called for this purpose. Synod Council shall seek the advice and counsel of the bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada in the call process.

Section 5.

All synod staff and staff committees shall be accountable to the bishop of this synod. The bishop of this synod may delegate responsibility to other staff as deemed appropriate.

ARTICLE XVI Committees

Section 1.

Synod Council shall have authority to establish such committees deemed necessary for the mission of this synod.

Section 2.

Terms of reference for, and membership on, any committee shall be defined in the bylaws of this synod or in the Policies of the Governance Manual of Synod Council.

ARTICLE XVII Theological Institutions

Section 1.

This synod acknowledges its responsibility to maintain a theological seminary within the guidelines provided by this church, to strengthen this seminary spiritually and academically, and to provide for its financial support.

Section 2.

- a. The Board of Governors of Lutheran Theological Seminary, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, shall control and manage the seminary and determine its academic and administrative affairs. The property of the seminary, both real and personal, shall be held by the Board of Governors in trust for and under the guidance of the British Columbia Synod, Alberta Synod, Saskatchewan Synod and Manitoba/Northwestern Ontario Synod.
- b. The board may, in consultation with this church, propose to the synod(s) an increase in the number of its members, such increase to include an equal number of ordained ministers and lay persons. Any proposal for increase in the number of members of the board must have the approval of the synod(s).
- c. The term of office for each member of the board shall be three years except in the following cases:
 - i. Where a member is appointed to fill a vacancy, such appointment shall be by the Synod Council and shall be for the remainder of the term of the predecessor.
 - ii. In the case of the first of any new elections in connection with increasing the number of the said board, the terms of office shall be for three or six years, so spaced that one-half of the membership of the board shall be elected each triennium.

- d. Members of the board shall be eligible to serve for not more than two consecutive terms.
- e. Financial support for the seminary shall be determined by a process of consultation between the Board of Governors, this church and the Synod Council.
- f. The board shall make an annual report to the regular convention of this synod.

ARTICLE XVIII Bylaws

Section 1.

This synod may adopt such bylaws, not in conflict with this constitution, as may be necessary. Such bylaws may be amended at any convention by a two-thirds vote of the delegates present and voting. At least one day shall elapse between first presentation and convention action unless unanimous consent to amend is given.

Section 2.

Bylaws relating to convention procedure may be suspended by a two-thirds vote of the delegates present and voting.

ARTICLE XIX Amendments

Section 1.

The Confession of Faith as stated in Article III shall be that of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada and is not amendable.

Section 2.

Amendments to this constitution shall be in writing and may be proposed by:

- a. the National Church Council;
- b. the Synod Council;
- c. a congregation of this synod if such proposal was first approved at a properly called and conducted congregational meeting; or
- d. ten convention delegates.

Section 3.

All proposed amendments must be reported to the convention no later than the first full day of business. The Synod Council shall make a report and recommendation during that convention on all proposed amendments. Adoption of an amendment shall require passage at this and the next regular convention by a two-thirds vote of the delegates present and voting. Notice of the full text thereof shall be sent to rostered ministers, congregations and synodically recognized ministries of this synod at least one month prior to the second reading.

Further amendment at the second reading shall require unanimous consent. Such amendments shall be effective upon ratification by the National Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada.

First Reading – June 2016; Approved by Convention Assembly
Second Reading – June 2018; Approved by Convention Assembly

Adopted: June 2018
Approved by National Church Council: *pending*