



Eastern Synod
of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

CONSTITUTION

EASTERN SYNOD

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN CANADA

2012 – 1st reading has Assembly approval in July 2012

2014 – 2nd reading has Assembly approval in June 2014

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ARTICLE I

Name and Incorporation

Section 1. The name of the synod functioning under this constitution shall be the Eastern Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada. For purposes of this constitution and accompanying administrative bylaws, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada is hereby referred to as "this church."

Section 2. This synod shall be incorporated under the laws of Canada.

Section 3. The seal of the Eastern Synod shall consist of a cross, encircled by the words "Eastern Synod Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada." The bishop shall have custody of the seal.

ARTICLE II

Geographic Boundaries

Section 1. The geographic boundaries of this synod shall be as described in the bylaws of this church.

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 Testament 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 subscribes to the documents of the *Book of Concord of 1580* as witnesses to the way in which the Holy Scriptures have been correctly understood, 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. The mission of this church, as an expression of the universal Church and as an instrument of the Holy Spirit, is to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with people in Canada and around the world through proclamation of the Word and the celebration of the Sacraments and through service in Christ's name.

Section 2. As the regional expression of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada and in faithfulness to the Lord of the Church, this synod shall facilitate and advance the mission of this church within its territory.

Section 3. This synod shall faithfully support the common work of this church and its international and ecumenical partners.

ARTICLE V

Membership

Section 1. The membership of this synod consists of 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 may revoke its recognition of any congregation or synodically recognized ministry in the manner described in the bylaws of this church.

ARTICLE VI

Congregations

Section 1. Every congregation which is recognized by this synod shall have constitutional documents which, in the judgment of this synod council, are in harmony with the constitution and bylaws of this church and of this synod.

Section 2. Every congregation shall support faithfully with prayer, personal service and offerings the common work of this church and of this synod.

Section 3. Every congregation of this synod shall choose a delegate or delegates to represent it at conventions of this synod and at meetings of the area to which the congregation is assigned in accordance with procedures as defined in the bylaws of this synod.

Section 4. The alignment of congregations in parishes 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. In case of strife and division in a congregation, the congregational council shall seek the advice of the bishop of this synod.

Section 7. When a pastor resigns, the congregational council shall receive the resignation, report it to the congregation and notify the bishop of this synod.

Section 8. A congregation desiring to withdraw from this church must comply with the procedures for withdrawal set out in the bylaws of this church.

Section 9. 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.

Section 10. A lay member of any congregation who is under discipline by his/her congregation may appeal to this synod in the manner described in the bylaws 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 may choose a representative to conventions of this synod in accordance with procedures as defined in the bylaws.

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 his/her 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. This 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 church.

Section 3. An ordained minister shall conduct himself/herself in accordance with the constitution, bylaws and policies of this synod and of this church.

ARTICLE IX

Rostered Ministers - Diaconal

Section 1. This synod shall maintain a roster of diaconal ministers.

Section 2. The standards of admission and continuance on the roster of diaconal ministers of this church shall be defined in the bylaws of this church.

Section 3. A diaconal minister shall conduct himself/herself 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 in accordance with the bylaws and policies of this synod.

ARTICLE XIII

Synod Council

Section 1. Synod Council is the governing body of this synod and shall carry out all functions and responsibilities on behalf of this synod in accordance with the constitution, the bylaws and resolutions of this synod in convention.

Section 2. Synod Council shall consist of the officers of this synod, and members, all of whom shall be members in good standing of congregations or synodically recognized ministries of this synod, elected according to procedures defined in the bylaws of this synod.

ARTICLE XIV

Officers

Section 1. The officers of this synod shall be a bishop, a vice-chairperson, a secretary and a treasurer. The bishop shall be on the roster of ordained ministers of this church. At least two of these officers shall be lay members of a congregation or synodically recognized ministry of this synod.

Section 2. The duties of the officers shall be defined in the bylaws of this synod.

Section 3. Officers, other than bishop, shall be elected by this synod in convention for a term of six (6) years, without term limitation, according to procedures established in the bylaws.

Section 4. The bishop shall serve as chairperson.

Section 5. Synod Council may appoint a replacement officer, with the exception of the office of the bishop, to fill a vacancy between conventions.

Section 6. The recall or dismissal of an officer of this synod shall follow the procedure set out in the bylaws of this church.

Section 7. Assistants to the officers, if and when such positions are created by this synod in convention, shall be appointed by the synod council on nomination by the officer concerned. Such persons may be recalled or dismissed on proper notice by the action of the synod council. They shall be ineligible for membership on the council.

ARTICLE XV

Office of the Bishop

Section 1. The bishop, 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 and convention.

Section 2. The bishop shall be *an ex officio* member of all committees of this synod.

Section 3. 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.

Section 4. The bishop shall be elected from the roster of ordained ministers of this church and its full communion partners.

Section 5. The bishop shall be elected by this synod in convention for a term of six years, without term limitation, according to the procedures established in the bylaws of this synod.

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 a policy manual.

ARTICLE XVII

Theological Institution

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. The Board of Governors of Waterloo Lutheran Seminary, Waterloo, Ontario shall control and manage the seminary and determine its academic and administrative affairs.

Section 3. Terms of reference for, and membership on, the Board of Governors of Waterloo Lutheran Seminary shall be defined in the constitution of Waterloo Lutheran Seminary subject to synod council approval.

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.

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 the synod, if such proposal was first approved at a duly called and conducted congregational meeting; or
- d. Ten convention delegates, representing at least four areas.

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 the ordained ministers and diaconal ministers on the rosters, 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 National Church Council.

Adopted: June 2014

Last Amended:

Approved by National Church Council: *pending*