

## Helpful Hints for Congregational Constitution Updates

The North Carolina Synod Council's Legal Committee offers the following tips to assist congregations in updating their constitutions:

1. Be sure to use the latest revision of the Model Constitution for Congregations, available from the Secretary of the ELCA at <http://www.elca.org/secretary/>
2. Make sure all asterisks (\*) which precede paragraphs are retained as shown as in the Model.
3. Make no changes or alteration, additions or deletions to "starred" paragraphs (those preceded with an asterisk (\*)).
4. Be sure to choose from alternatives enclosed in brackets (example: \*8.02.d; C10.02.)
5. Insert numbers where they are left to the congregation to determine (example: C10.02; C10.04; C12.05.c.)
6. Changes to non-starred items, and bylaws can not conflict with the Model Constitution for Congregations.
7. Make sure the name of the North Carolina Synod is inserted at the appropriate places (Example:\*6.01;\*7.05.b.)
8. Depending on your congregation's situation, choose the appropriate paragraph and omit the other at \*C.6.05.g and h.
9. Do not change lettering or numbering. Where numbers are skipped, retain numbering as shown in the Model (example: \*C9.14-C9.21.)
10. Choose only one of the alternative paragraphs where more than one alternative is offered in brackets (C11.02; C12.02)
11. Additional information that will assist in updating your constitution, including proper codification as well as an explanation of bylaws and continuing resolutions and the proper use of each are included in the introduction to the Model Constitution for Congregations, available on the ELCA Secretary's website: <http://www.elca.org/secretary/>

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.
- 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 record 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...*



For reference to ELCA Model Constitution documents, please go to:

<http://www.elca.org/Who-We-Are/Our-Three-Expressions/Churchwide-Organization/Office-of-the-Secretary/Congregation-Administration/Model-Constitution-for-Congregations.aspx>

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