

2016 CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY PROPOSED CONSTITUTION CHANGES

Presented to the Assembly by the Oregon Synod Council in response to recommendations of the 2016 ELCA Churchwide Assembly.

Strikeouts indicated deleted text. Underscores indicate added text.

The 2016 Churchwide Assembly voted to merge three existing lay rosters of the church into a single “Word and Service” roster. Several churchwide and synodical constitutional changes have been made to implement this change, primarily language changes using “ministers of Word and Sacrament” to refer to ordained clergy, and “ministers of Word and Service” to refer to the new Diaconal roster. These changes are made automatically.

The following additions are suggested changes and brought to the Assembly for your consideration with a recommendation to “adopt” by the Oregon Synod Council.

S7.22. ~~The~~ This synod may establish processes that permit retired ~~ordained~~ rostered ministers, retired associates in ministry, retired deaconesses, and retired diaconal ministers on the roster of this synod to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, consistent with †S7.21.c. above. ~~The synod may establish processes that permit ordained ministers, associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers who are on leave from call, or those designated as disabled, or on leave from call, on the roster of the synod to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, consistent with †S7.21.c. above. If the synod does not establish processes to permit the rostered leaders~~ ministers specified above to serve as voting members, they shall have voice but not vote in the meetings of the Synod Assembly.

S7.22.01. Retired ~~ordained~~ ministers, associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers on the roster of this synod in attendance at the Synod Assembly shall be voting members of the Synod Assembly, consistent with S7.21.c and S7.22.

S7.22.02. ~~Per diem expenses for the Synod Assembly as determined by the Synod Council shall be available from the synod to all retired ordained ministers, retired associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers on the synod's roster.~~

S7.24. ~~Ordained ministers~~ Ministers under call on the rosters of this synod shall remain as members of the Synod Assembly so long as they remain under call and so long as their names appear on the rosters of ~~ordained ministers of this synod. Associates in ministry, deaconesses of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and diaconal ministers of this church serving under call on the roster of this synod shall remain as members of the Synod Assembly so long as they remain under call and so long as their names appear on the official lay roster of this synod.~~ Lay members of the Synod Assembly representing congregations shall continue as such until replaced by the election of new members or until they have been disqualified by termination of membership. Normally, congregations will hold elections prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.

S7.27. This synod may establish processes through the Synod Council to grant an ~~ordained~~ minister of Word and Sacrament from a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by the Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America the privilege of both voice and vote in the Synod Assembly during the period of that ~~ordained~~ minister's service in a congregation of this church.

S10.03. The functions of the Synod Council shall be to:

...

d. Provide for an annual review of the roster of ~~ordained~~ ministers of Word and Sacrament and the roster of ministers of Word and Service ~~and of other official rosters~~, receive and act upon appropriate recommendations regarding those persons whose status is subject to reconsideration and action under the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and make a report to the Synod Assembly of the Synod Council's actions in this regard.

e. Issue letters of call to ~~ordained~~ rostered ministers and letters of call to ~~associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers~~ as authorized by Chapter 7 of the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

S11.11. This synod shall in its bylaws or by continuing resolution establish a process to ensure that the members of its committees and other organizational units will be persons possessing the necessary knowledge and competence to be effective members of such units, and to meet the requirements of ~~†S6.04~~. With the exception of ~~ordained~~ ministers on the rosters of this synod who reside outside the territory of this synod, each member of a committee of this synod, or any other organizational unit created by this synod, shall be a voting member of a congregation of this synod.

S13.11. When a ~~pastor or when an associate in ministry, deaconess, or diaconal-rostered~~ minister resigns, the Congregation Council shall receive the letter of resignation, report it to the congregation, and at once notify the bishop of this synod.

S13.12. A congregation under financial obligation to its former ~~pastor or associate in ministry, deaconess, or diaconal~~ rostered minister shall make satisfactory settlement of the obligation before calling a successor.

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Chapter 14

~~ORDAINED MINISTERS AND LAY ROSTERED MINISTERS~~

~~S14.01.10. Ministers of Word and Sacrament~~

~~S14.013.~~ The pastor (a) shall keep accurate parochial records of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, communicants, members received, members dismissed, or members excluded from the congregation, (b) shall submit a summary of such statistics annually to this synod, and (c) shall become a member of the congregation upon receipt and acceptance of the letter of call. In a parish of multiple congregations, the pastor shall hold membership in one of the congregations.

~~S14.0413.01. Ordained ministers~~ Minsters of Word and Sacrament with non-congregational calls shall arrange to have their pastoral acts recorded in an ELCA congregation.

~~S14.04.~~ The pastor a. shall keep accurate parochial records of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, communicants, members received, members dismissed, or members excluded from the congregation, b. shall submit a summary of such statistics annually to this synod, and c. shall become a member of the congregation upon receipt and acceptance of the letter of call. In a parish of multiple congregations, the pastor shall hold membership in one of the congregations.

~~S14.05~~14 Whenever members of a congregation move to such a distance that regular attendance at its services becomes impractical, it shall be the duty of the pastor to commend them, upon their consent, to the pastoral care of a Lutheran congregation nearer to their place of residence.

~~S14.06~~15 Each ~~ordained minister, associate in ministry, deaconess, and diaconal minister~~ of Word and Sacrament on the roll rosters of this synod shall submit a report of his or her ministry to the bishop of the synod at least 90 days prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.

~~S14.11~~16. When a congregation of this church desires to call a pastor or a candidate for the ~~pastoral~~ office in the ~~ordained~~ ministry of Word and Sacrament this church: . . .

b. For issuance of a letter of call to a pastor or ~~pastoral~~ candidate by a congregation of this synod in accord with ELCA constitutional provision 7.41., a two-thirds majority ballot vote shall be required of voting members of the congregation present and voting at a meeting regularly called for the purpose of issuing such a call. . . .

~~S14.12~~7. No ~~ordained minister~~ of Word and Sacrament shall accept a call without first conferring with the bishop of this synod. An ~~ordained minister~~ of Word and Sacrament shall respond with an answer of acceptance or declination to a letter of call within thirty days of receipt of such call. In exceptional circumstances with the approval of the bishop of this synod and the chair of the congregational council of the congregation issuing

~~S14.21~~5. All ~~ordained ministers~~ of Word and Sacrament under a call shall attend meetings of the Synod Assembly, and the pastors of congregations shall attend regular meetings of the conference, cluster, coalition, or other are subdivision to which the congregation belongs.

S14.30. Official Roster of Lay Persons ~~Ministers of Word and Service~~

S14.34. Each minister of Word and Service on the roster of this synod shall submit a report of his or her ministry to the bishop of the synod at least 90 days prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.

S14.42. No minister of Word and Service shall accept a call without first conferring with the bishop of the synod. A minister of Word and Service shall respond with an answer of acceptance or declination to a letter of call.

The following constitutional amendments have also been recommended as a result of the 2016 ELCA Churchwide Assembly action to unite the Lay Rosters. However, the Oregon Synod Council has amended the language given to us, there for adoption requires a positive vote at both his Assembly *and* the 2018 Oregon Synod Assembly. They will be considered separately.

The change in these two sections involves the use of the words “is/are encouraged to” rather than the recommended “shall.” Bishop Brauer-Rieke has recommended this change in light of the fact that the Oregon Synod, as of yet, has no deacons called in congregational settings. Given this, it seems unwise to proscribe conditions we have yet to live into. There may be circumstances in which a deacon may be called to part-time service in a congregation while finding it beneficial to keep membership in another. In the same fashion, currently all deacons under call have been called by the Oregon Synod, not a congregation. These calls are to allied ministries such as chaplaincies or hospice care. Attendance at Synod Assemblies in such cases is unsupported financially and would require time away from work which may not be possible. Therefore, requiring attendance at Synod Assemblies may be problematic. Certainly deacons are always welcome and encouraged to attend Synod Assemblies.

S14.33. The minister of Word and Service *is encouraged to* become a member of the congregation upon receipt and acceptance of the letter of call. In a parish of multiple congregations, the minister of Word and Service *is encouraged to* hold membership in one of the congregations.

S14.47. All ministers of Word and Service under a call *are encouraged to* attend meetings of the Synod Assembly, and the ministers of Word and Service of congregations are encouraged to attend the meetings of the cluster to which the congregation belongs.