

**CONSTITUTION**  
**of the**  
**The Synod of Alberta and the Territories**  
Amended June, 2010

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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.
- Section 2. The synod shall be incorporated under the laws of Alberta.
- Section 3. The seal of the 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, 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 its congregations and ordained ministers, and by engaging in other forms of ministry which proclaim God's Word and serve to 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 the synod consists of member congregations. Baptized individuals who are members of a congregation ("baptized members") shall exercise their privileges and responsibilities through participation in the congregation in which they are members.

Section 2. The 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 the church.

Section 3. Additional congregations may be recognized by the synod acting on behalf of this church in the manner described in the constitution and bylaws of this church.

Section 4. The synod may revoke its recognition of any congregation in the manner described in the constitution and bylaws of this Church.

## **ARTICLE VI Congregations**

### **Section 1. Constitutions**

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 the synod.

### **Section 2. Representation to ELCIC Conventions**

Every parish not represented by an ordained minister shall elect a lay delegate to the convention of this Church. If a parish has more than eight hundred (800) baptized members two lay delegates shall be elected, unless a pastor of the parish has been chosen by the conference, in which case one lay delegate shall be elected.

### **Section 3. Representation to the Synod and Conference Conventions**

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

### **Section 4. Relation to Synod**

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

### **Section 5. Petitions**

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

### **Section 6. Solicitation of Funds**

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. Provision of Pastors**

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

### **Section 8. Advice of the Bishop**

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

Section 9. **Appeals from Discipline**

A lay member of any congregation, who is under discipline, may appeal to the synod. All such appeals must be in writing to the bishop within thirty (30) days after the disciplinary action has been taken. Copies of said appeal shall be transmitted by the appellant to the pastor and to the secretary of the congregation. The bishop shall appoint a special committee to investigate the appeal. The decision of the committee shall be final and reported to the appropriate parties.

Section 10. **Procedures for Withdrawing**

A congregation desiring to withdraw from this church shall notify the synod bishop. Decision to withdraw must be approved by a two-thirds majority vote at a legally called and conducted meeting and immediately reported to the synod bishop. Decision to withdraw shall not become effective until action has been ratified by a two-thirds majority vote at a subsequently legally called and conducted meeting held not less than 90 days after the first vote to withdraw.

Section 11. **Congregation Becoming Defunct**

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 the synod of which it was a part to be defunct. The 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**  
**Ordained Ministers**

Section 1. The synod shall have a roster of ordained ministers.

Section 2. The standards of acceptance and continuance on the roster of ordained ministers shall be defined in the bylaws of the synod.

Section 3. An ordained minister shall preach the Word, administer the Sacraments and conduct public worship in harmony with the faith and practices of the Church; shall baptize, confirm and marry in accordance with the teaching of the Church and with the laws of the province; shall visit the sick and distressed and bury the dead; shall inculcate piety in individual and family life and provide pastoral leadership to all schools and auxiliary organizations of the congregation; shall install members of the congregational council and, with the council, administer discipline; shall seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel and strive to extend the Kingdom of God in the

community, at home and abroad; and shall encourage the members to be generous in support of the ministry of the congregation, the synod and the church.

## **ARTICLE VIII**

### **Diaconal Ministers**

- Section 1. The synod shall have a roster of diaconal ministers.
- Section 2. The standards of acceptance and continuance on the roster of diaconal ministers shall be defined in the bylaws of this synod.

## **ARTICLE IX**

### **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 X**

### **Conferences**

- Section 1. The synod shall be organized regionally into conferences whose members and boundaries shall be determined by the synod in convention upon the recommendation of the Synod Council.
- Section 2. The role of the conferences shall be defined in the bylaws of the synod.

## **ARTICLE XI**

### **Conventions**

- Section 1. The convention of the 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 the synod.

## **ARTICLE XII**

### **Synod Council**

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

- Section 2. Synod Council shall consist of the officers of the synod, and members elected and appointed according to procedures defined in the bylaws of the synod. Members shall serve for four-year terms, with half of the terms expiring each biennium. No elected member is eligible to serve for more than two consecutive terms. 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 shall be an ex officio member of Synod Council.

### **ARTICLE XIII**

#### **Officers**

- Section 1. The officers of the synod shall be the chairperson, the secretary and the treasurer. Two of the three officers shall be lay members of the synod.
- Section 2. The duties of the officers shall be defined in the bylaws of the synod.
- Section 3. The officers shall be elected by the synod convention for a term of four years, without limitation, according to procedures established in the bylaws. 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 the 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 assistant to an officer in accordance with procedures defined in the bylaws of the synod. Such persons shall be ineligible for membership on Synod Council.

### **ARTICLE XIV**

#### **The Office of the Bishop**

- Section 1. The bishop shall be a pastor and counsellor to all pastors and lay members of the 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, pastors and institutions of the synod.

- Section 2. The bishop shall be the chief executive officer of the synod, and an ex officio member of all committees of the synod.
- Section 3. The bishop, as the chief executive officer of the 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 the 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. The bishop may delegate responsibility to other staff as deemed appropriate.

## **ARTICLE XV**

### **Committees**

- Section 1. Synod Council shall have authority to establish such committees deemed necessary for the mission of the synod.

## **ARTICLE XVI**

### **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 the 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 four 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 two or four years, so spaced that one-half of the membership of the board shall be elected each biennium.
- 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 the synod.

## **ARTICLE XVII**

### **Auxiliaries**

There shall be synodical units of the official auxiliaries of this church. Such units shall report to the Synod Council and conventions. The bishop, or an appointee, shall have seat and voice at synodical unit conventions and board meetings.

## **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 either
- a. the National Church Council
  - b. the Synod Council,
  - c. a congregation of the synod, or
  - d. ten 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 the pastors and congregations of the 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 Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada in convention or by its National Church Council.