# Handbook of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod



Articles of Incorporation
Constitution and Bylaws
Policies

Adopted by the Evangelical Lutheran Synod

2026

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# Introduction

The work of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod and its boards and committees is guided by five categories of documents: (1) the Holy Bible, (2) the confessions of the Lutheran Church set forth in the Book of Concord of 1580, (3) the articles of incorporation, (4) the constitution and (5) the various guidelines.

The Bible is the holy, perfect, inerrant, soul-saving Word of God to which nothing is to be added and from which nothing is to be taken away.

The symbolical books or confessions, enumerated in the constitution, are the works of men, but we believe them to be "a correct statement of the teachings of Scripture."

The articles of incorporation are the synod's face to the world. Articles are required of all corporations and state the mission of the corporation and its civic relationship. There are four: (1) The Articles of Incorporation of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (Minnesota), (2) The Articles of Incorporation of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (Wisconsin), (3) The Articles of Incorporation of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod Foundation and (4) The Articles of Incorporation of Bethany Lutheran College.

The constitution describes the manner in which the synod will function. The bylaws of the constitution provide more elaboration.

The guidelines provide direction for the work of the various boards and committees of the synod, for the conduct of the conventions, and for the work of the visitors.

While the synod has no authority to amend the Scriptures or the confessions, it does have the authority in convention to amend the articles of incorporation, the constitution and the bylaws, as well as these guidelines, provided that the proposed amendments have been previously announced in the *Book of Reports and Memorials* or the *Convention Handbook* and are a part of the agenda. Amendments to the constitution require ratification at the succeeding convention.

This handbook contains the articles of incorporation, the constitution and the guidelines. These documents have been assembled into three sections, Administration, Faith and Service, and Education. These are detailed for you in the table of contents. There follows a listing of the congregations by the circuit divisions and a topical index.

All of the parts of the handbook except the tables of contents and the index have been adopted by the synod in convention; therefore, it is the obligation of the officers, the boards and committees and the congregations to follow their guidance. The guidelines are the directions that the conventions have given to the boards and committees as they proceed to conduct their business. These documents were written, revised and approved by men, therefore they are subject to error and to changes that circumstances or time may bring. Guidelines that are no longer appropriate should not be ignored, but mention should be made of them in the board or committee's regular report to the convention. It is most likely that the convention will direct the Synod Review Committee to study the expressed concern and report to the next convention. The Board of Trustees and the president also may direct the committee to make various studies. While this handbook contains the guidelines as they were in effect following the June 2002 convention, it is likely that there will be changes adopted by succeeding conventions; therefore, it is the recommendation of the Synod Review Committee that a review of this document and any amendment thereto be made at some time within the next five years to determine whether there is need for republication.

In the fall of 1996 the president assigned to the Synod Review Committee the task of reviewing the then current handbook. The committee studied the handbook and the amendments that had been adopted by conventions since the last time that the book had been published. The goal was to design the guidelines to meet the current needs and practices of the boards and committees. Many parts have been revised more than once. Since that time [1996] the members of the committee have been Prof. em. J.B. Madson, chairman, Mr. Robert Brown, both elected by the convention; and Pastor em. Alf Merseth, secretary, Pastor em. M. E. Twiet, and Norman Werner, all appointed by the president. In June 2002 the convention directed the Synod Review Committee and the Board for Publications to see to the publishing of the handbook.

Synod Review Committee
August 2002

As noted in the 2002 introduction, changes in the synod organization have occurred since that year. Over the past four years (2014 to 2017) the *ELS Handbook* has been revised to reflect those changes. The Synod Review Committee consists of two elected members (one layman and one clergy) and three members appointed by the synod president (two clergy and one layman).

The *Synod Handbook*, as adopted at the 2002 convention, was published according to the convention resolution (see *Synod Report* 2002, Resolution No. 9, p. 163).

Since 2002, the Synod Review Committee has reported on studies about which the synod conventions did not adopt the proposals. They are listed as follows:

1. The 2002 convention directed the Synod Review Committee to "study the issue of term limits in general" (*Synod Report* 2002, Resolution No. 2, p. 162). The Synod Review Committee's report to the 2003 Convention included documents listing expressions of support and opposition for term limits, a paper that Rev. Christian Anderson presented at the 1952 General Pastoral Conference titled "Underlying Causes of the Deterioration and Breakdown of the Old Norwegian Synod," a chart of those holding synodical offices from 1953 to 2003, and the committee's recommendation to not have term limits, but that officers be limited to three consecutive terms. The 2003 convention resolved to not have term limits for the synod president and vice-president (*Synod Report* 2003, Resolution No. 2, p. 139).
2. The 2003 and 2004 conventions did not adopt a proposed "Procedures for Electing a Synod President and Vice President (*Synod Report* 2003, pp. 135-136; 2004, pp. 138-139, Secretary's Note, p. 139).
3. The Planning and Coordinating Committee requested that the Synod Review Committee study the issue of biennial synod conventions. The committee's report presented four alternative options to be studied further. The convention directed that the Planning and Coordinating Committee study this material (*Synod Report* 2004, pp. 143-147, Resolution No. 10, p. 148).

Since 2002, the synod convention has adopted the following work of the Synod Review Committee:

The issue of adequate compensation for a pastor, already discussed by the Synod Review Committee in 1985, was assigned to the committee by the 2003 convention. In 2004, the convention adopted the revision of the Guidelines for Circuit Visitors and Visitations and the Guidelines When There is a Pastor or Teacher Vacancy in a Congregation. (*Synod Report* 2004, pp. 139-142, Resolutions 6 to 9, p. 148).

The 2006 convention adopted several guideline revisions: 1) the Lutheran Schools of America, which reorganized the former Board for Education and Youth (*Synod Report* 2006, pp. 145-156, Resolutions 2 and 3, p. 127); 2) a complete revision of Guidelines for Colloquies and the Colloquy Committee (*Synod Report* 2006, pp.156-158, Resolution 1, p.168); 3) Guidelines for the General Pastoral Conference (*Synod Report* 2006, pp. 161-162, Resolution 6, p. 168); and 4) guidelines for a sub-committee of the Boards of Regents and Trustees (especially related to capital improvements) (*Synod Report* 2006, pp. 163-165, Resolution 8, p. 168).

The next year, the convention adopted the restated Articles of Incorporation of the Lutheran Schools of America and directed them for filing with the State of Minnesota (*Synod Report* 2007, pp. 114-117, Resolutions 3-6, pp. 117-118).

In 2008, the synod convention adopted guidelines for the Procedures for adopting doctrinal statements (*Synod Report* 2008, pp. 143-145, Resolution 1, pp.150-151) and for a permanent Board of Appeals (*Synod Report* 2008, pp. 148-150, Resolution 4, p. 151).

The 2008 convention directed that Thoughts of Faith, Inc. be merged with the synod's Board for Foreign Missions. Guidelines for this reorganized Board for World Outreach were adopted by the 2009 convention (*Synod Report* 2009, pp. 115-124, Resolutions 1 to 4, pp. 128-129). This action required changes to the Guidelines for the Home Missions Counselor, which changes were adopted in 2010 (*Synod Report* 2010, pp. 150-151, Resolution 4, p.151).

In 2011, the convention adopted a revised Chapter VII (Jurisdiction and Duties of the Officers) of the Bylaws of the Constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (*Synod Report* 2011, pp. 123-126, Resolution 2, p. 128).

The 2012 convention, 1) established the Committee for Communication and published guidelines for it (*Synod Report* 2012, pp. 135-137, Resolution 1, p. 149); 2) published revised guidelines for the Board of Youth Outreach (*Synod Report* 2012, pp. 137-138); 3) merged the Board for Stewardship and the Office of Giving Counselor to be under the jurisdiction of the Board of Trustees (*Synod Report* 2012, pp. 138-140); and 4) merged the Board for Evangelism and the Board for Home Missions to form the Board for Home Outreach (*Synod Report* 2012, pp. 140-143).

In 2013, the synod convention resolved that the Synod Review Committee "conduct [a] review of the *Handbook* and to report" (*Synod Report* 2013, Res. 3, pp. 114-115). During the past four years (2014 to 2017) the Synod Review Committee has presented to the convention such a review with recommended changes that reflect the changing organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod. One major change took place in 2016, when the convention adopted the Guidelines for the Board for Education, replacing the Board for Lutheran Schools of America, but retaining the Constitution and Bylaws of the Lutheran Schools of America, Inc.

The 2017 convention adopted a new section, Guidelines to the Board of Regents and changes to the Bylaws, and Guidelines for the Board of Regents (*Synod Report* 2017, Res. 2.E, p. 165).

The current members of the Synod Review Committee are Prof. Erling Teigen, Rev. Theodore Gullixson, Mr. Herman Harstad, Rev. Piet Van Kampen, and Mr. Norman Werner.

# Articles of Incorporation and Constitution



# Section 110
# Articles of Incorporation of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod

**Article I**

That a corporation is hereby formed and incorporated under the laws of the State of Minnesota, and more particularly Sections 6612 and 6613 General Statutes of Minnesota, 1913, being Sections 3152 and 3153 Revised Laws, 1905.

**Article II**

The name of this corporation shall be the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

**Article III**

This corporation is organized on a membership basis and shall have no capital stock, nor the authority to issue such stock. The membership of this corporation shall consist of those congregations and individuals who subscribe to the Constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod and have been accepted into membership. (see The Constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Chapter II) The government of this corporation shall be vested in its membership and exercised by its delegate conventions.

**Article IV**

The synod accepts as its only source and rule of faith and doctrine God's Holy Word revealed in the canonical books in the Old and New Testaments; and all the Confessions of the Lutheran Church contained in the Book of Concord, as a true exposition of the canonical books in the Old and New Testaments. These books are: The Apostles' Creed; The Nicene Creed; The Athanasian Creed; The Unaltered Augsburg Confession; The Apology of the Augsburg Confession; The Smalcald Articles; Luther's Small Catechism; Luther's Large Catechism; The Formula of Concord (Epitome); The Formula of Concord (Solid Declaration).

**Article V**

The purpose of this corporation shall be to foster, maintain and establish the interests of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, and to that end establish missions, call and send missionaries, establish and maintain schools, colleges, seminaries, orphans' homes and charitable institutions; educate ministers of the gospel, teachers for Christian instruction of children and youths, and missionaries for mission work; encourage discussion of moral and theological themes, maintain the preaching of the Word of God and use proper means to develop true faith and Christian lives among its members; encourage the reading and use of the Holy Scripture, Lutheran school books, hymn books and other devotional books, periodicals and papers, by dealing therein and printing and publishing the same.

To carry its purpose into effect, this corporation may exercise all the power conferred by the laws of this state, and may adopt a corporate seal, make contracts, establish bylaws, rules and regulations of the management of its business, sue and be sued by its corporate name, and may acquire real and personal property by purchase, gift, grant, devise or bequest, and hold and employ the same for religious, charitable or educational purposes, and may sell, invest, transfer or mortgage the same, and transact all secular business and manage the temporal affairs of said corporation, and may exercise such other power as its constitution and bylaws may prescribe, not inconsistent with the Laws of this state and the Lutheran Confessions.

**Article VI**

The registered address of this corporation shall be 6 Browns Court, City of Mankato, Blue Earth County, State of Minnesota 56001.

**Article VII**

The corporation shall meet annually for the purpose of conducting the affairs of the corporation. At such meetings, the lay delegates of the congregations of this synod and every pastor of such congregations and such other persons as the corporation's constitution and bylaws may determine shall be entitled to vote. These members shall have the power to transact all business pertaining to the affairs of the corporation. The secretary shall give written notice of meetings to each congregation from which the membership of this corporation is drawn stating the time and place of the meeting, which notice may either be addressed according to the last available corporate records and mailed, not less than ten (10) or more

than thirty (30) days before the date of said meeting, or published in an official publication of the synod which is regularly circulated to all such congregations within sixty (60) days of the date of the meeting.

**Article VIII**

Between meetings of the corporate membership, the general management and control of this corporation shall be vested in a board of nine (9) trustees, two (2) of whom shall be the president and secretary elected at the corporation's annual meeting. The president and secretary shall be elected for a term of four (4) years. The remaining seven (7) trustees shall each be elected for three (3) year terms, two (2) shall be elected at the corporation's annual meeting in the year 2000, three (3) shall be elected in the year 2001 and two (2) shall be elected in the year 2002. Thereafter officers and trustees shall be elected as their terms expire. At the same time the president is elected, a vice president shall be elected for a four (4) year term.

There shall not at any time be more than five (5) or less than three (3) pastors on the Board of Trustees.

**Article IX**

The trustees shall have the general management and control of all the secular business and temporal affairs of said corporation. All such business and affairs they shall conduct in accordance with the constitution, bylaws, rules and resolutions of the synod. The secretary shall keep a record of all transactions of the board and have custody of the corporate seal.

**Article X**

The Board of Trustees shall appoint a treasurer of the corporation and arrange for his bonding. He shall serve at the pleasure of the board and shall receive and disburse the funds of the corporation under the direction of the synod and the Board of Trustees, and shall keep true account of all funds received and disbursed and make full report to the Board of Trustees at such times as the board by resolution may request. Any change in the fiscal year of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod shall be proposed by the Board of Trustees and approved by a convention.

**Article XI**

The names and addresses of those elected as the first officers of the corporation are as follows:

Trustees for one year:

B. Harstad, Parkland, Washington
P. Tjernagel, Story City, Iowa

Trustees for two years:

L. E. Ludvig, Lake Mills, Iowa
Nels Spangelo, Albert Lea, Minnesota

Trustees for three years:

Alvin Drotning, Deerfield, Wisconsin
G. A. Gullixson, Chicago, Illinois

**Article XII**

This corporation does not afford pecuniary gain, incidentally or otherwise, to its members. The property of the corporation is irrevocably dedicated to religious, charitable, or hospital purposes and upon the liquidation, dissolution, or abandonment of the owner will not inure to the benefit of any private person, but may inure to the benefit of a fund, foundation or corporation organized and operated for religious, hospital or charitable purposes.

**Article XIII**

The duration of this corporation shall be perpetual.

**History of the Amendments to the Articles of Incorporation**

Articles of Incorporation originally adopted June 10, 1920, amended as to Article X in 1956; amended as to name in 1957–1958; amended as to Article VI in 1962 and amended as to Articles V and VI in 1985, with Article XI added in 1985. In 2000 a new Article III was added; previous Article III amended and renumbered as Article IV; previous Article IV renumbered as Article V; previous Article V renumbered as Article VI and also amended as to address; previous Article VI divided into Articles VII and VIII and amended; previous Articles VII through XI renumbered as Articles IX through XIII, respectively; Article X (previously VIII) amended.

I, B. Harstad, do hereby certify that I was the presiding officer (and I, L. P. Jenson, certify that I was secretary) of a meeting at the City of Minneapolis, in the State of Minnesota, on the 10th day of June, 1920, held by the representatives, delegates and others entitled to vote at the annual meeting for 1920, of the Norwegian Synod of the American Evangelical Lutheran Church (now known as the Evangelical Lutheran Synod), which is a synod for religious purposes, composed of and representing several congregations in the State of Minnesota and elsewhere; that at said meeting a resolution to form a corporation was duly adopted by said representatives, delegates and others so entitled to vote; that the foregoing is a true copy of said resolutions and of the whole thereof.

Dated at Minneapolis, Minnesota, June 10th, 1920.

L. P. Jenson, Secretary

Bjug Harstad, Presiding Officer

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 10th day of June, 1920

K. T. Dahlen,
Notary Public, Hennepin County, Minn.
My commission expires February 2, 1921

## Section 111
# The Norwegian Synod of the American Evangelical Lutheran Church Under Chapter 187 of the Laws Of Wisconsin Section 187.05(1)

(Articles of Incorporation of the Norwegian Synod of the American Evangelical Lutheran Church filed with the State of Wisconsin, October 28, 1940.)

We, the undersigned, H. Ingebritson, President, and Geo. O Lillegard, Secretary, respectively of THE NORWEGIAN SYNOD OF THE AMERICAN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH, hereby certify that at the Annual Convention of said Synod held June 13, 1940, to June 19, 1940, inclusive, and specifically on the 19th day of June, 1940, the following proceedings were had and the following resolution was adopted, to wit:

Whereas, The Norwegian Synod of the American Evangelical Lutheran Church is incorporated under the Laws of the State of Minnesota, and

Whereas, considerable real property, loans and church extension funds, gifts, legacies and bequests, are subject to the laws of the State of Wisconsin, where considerable such real property and other assets are located, and where gifts, legacies and bequests have to be probated and administered, and

Whereas, the Synod is advised that much delay and inconvenience may be avoided and a considerable saving of expense effected by being incorporated also under the laws of the State of Wisconsin,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the Norwegian Synod of the American Evangelical Lutheran Church that the Board of Trustees of said Synod be authorized and directed to incorporate under section 187.05(1) of the Wisconsin Statutes in the manner therein provided,

We further certify that the duly elected trustees of said Synod are the following, to-wit: Rev. E. Hanson, John M. Melaas, elected in 1938 for 3 years. Terms expire in 1941. Professor C. A. Molstad, H. N. Hanson, elected 1939 for 3 years, Terms expire 1942. Rev. J. B. Unseth, A. O. Anderson, elected 1940 for 3 years. Terms expire 1943.

We further certify that the name of the body by whom above named trustees were elected is - THE NORWEGIAN SYNOD OF THE AMERICAN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH; that the corporate name by which such trustees are to be known is THE NORWEGIAN SYNOD OF THE AMERICAN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH, and that the terms of office of said trustees are 3 years, two elected at each Annual Convention of said Synod, and the corporate location at Madison, Wisconsin.

We further certify that the purpose for which it is desired to incorporate them in the State of Wisconsin is as stated in the preamble to the above and foregoing resolution, to wit:

To facilitate the administration of the affairs of said Synod in Wisconsin and preserve its real property, loans, church extension funds, gifts, legacies and bequests, given, devised and bequeathed to said Synod for its use and benefit in said State, and otherwise assist and promote the object and purposes of said Synod.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, we, the said H. Ingebritson, the President, and Geo. O. Lillegard, the Secretary, have hereunto set our hands and seals this 20th day of October A.D., 1940.

H. Ingebritson (signed) (SEAL) President.

Geo. O. Lillegard (signed) (SEAL) Secretary.

(The name of the synod was changed to "Evangelical Lutheran Synod" June 1957 and filed with the Secretary of State of the State of Wisconsin on May 12, 1976, and in Dane County, Wisconsin, on June 15, 1976.)

**United States of America**

State of Wisconsin-Department of State

To All to Whom These Presents Shall Come, Greeting:

The undersigned, as Secretary of State of the State of Wisconsin, certifies that Articles of Incorporation of THE NORWEGIAN SYNOD OF THE AMERICAN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH chg name to EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD of which the attached is a duplicate, was on the date hereof, accepted and filed in my office.

In Testimony Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my official seal at the Capitol, in the City of Madison, on May 12, 1976

Douglas LaFollette (signed)
DOUGLAS LAFOLLETTE
Secretary of State

**United States of America**
**State of Wisconsin**
**Department of State**

To All To Whom These Presents Shall Come:

The undersigned, as Secretary of State of the State of Wisconsin, hereby certifies that, on payment of the fee required by law, there was filed in my office on May 12, 1976, Amendment to Articles of Incorporation of THE NORWEGIAN SYNOD OF THE AMERICAN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH changing the name to EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD.

I further certify that a certificate has been filed in my office to the effect that a duplicate thereof, bearing my certificate, was recorded in the office of the Register of Deeds of Dane County, Wisconsin, on June 15, 1976.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my official seal, at the Capitol, in the City of Madison, on July 22, 1976.

Douglas LaFollette (signed)
DOUGLAS LAFOLLETTE
Secretary of State

# Section 120
# The Constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod

### Chapter I: Name and Confession

Paragraph 1
The name of this organization shall be: Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

Paragraph 2
The only source and rule of the Synod's faith and doctrine is the Word of God, revealed in the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments.

Paragraph 3
The Evangelical Lutheran Synod subscribes to all the symbolical books, or confessions, of the Lutheran Church contained in the Book of Concord, because they are a correct statement of the teachings of Scripture, namely:
a) The three ecumenical creeds: the Apostolic, the Nicene and the Athanasian;
b) The Unaltered Augsburg Confession;
c) The Apology of the Augsburg Confession;
d) The Smalcald Articles;
e) Luther's Small Catechism;
f) Luther's Large Catechism;
g) The Formula of Concord, Epitome;
h) The Formula of Concord, Thorough Declaration.

### Chapter II: Membership (see Bylaws Chapter II)

The synod consists of those congregations and individuals who subscribe to this constitution and have been accepted into membership.

### Chapter III: Purpose (see Bylaws Chapter III)

The synod exists to carry out the command of Jesus Christ to preach the Gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15; Matthew 28:19–20), to contend for the faith (Jude 3), and to promote the development of Christian life (Galatians 5:22–25) within its membership.

### Chapter IV: Conventions (see Bylaws Chapter IV)

In accordance with the apostolic example in Acts 15, the affairs of the synod are to be organized and directed by conventions called for that purpose.

### Chapter V: Governance Between Conventions

The activities of the synod between conventions shall be conducted by its officers, boards and committees.

Paragraph 1
The governance of the synod shall be vested in a board of nine (9) trustees, who shall have jurisdiction over all secular business and temporal affairs of the synod. They shall conduct these affairs in accordance with the constitution, bylaws, rules and resolutions of the synod.

Paragraph 2
The board shall consist of nine (9) trustees, two (2) of whom shall be the president and the secretary of the synod. There shall not at any one time be more than five (5) or less than three (3) pastors on the board. The president and the secretary of the synod shall also be the president and the secretary of the Board of Trustees. The vice president of the synod shall be an advisory member of the Board of Trustees.

Paragraph 3
Other areas of the synod's work shall be assigned to its various boards and committees and shall be conducted in accordance with the regulations established by the synod.

**Chapter VI: Officers (see Bylaws Chapter VI and Chapter VII)**

The officers of the synod are its president, vice president and secretary.

**Chapter VII: Amendments**

With the exception of Chapter I paragraphs 2 and 3 (the contents of which must not be changed), amendments to this constitution may be made in the following manner:

Resolutions for amendments are to be presented to a regular convention and if adopted by a two-thirds majority vote be published, so that the congregations may review such amendments and respond to the president of the synod prior to the next regular synodical convention, which convention shall consider the proposed amendment(s) again, and if ratified by a two-thirds majority vote, shall become amendments to the constitution.

# Section 121
# Bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod

### Chapter I: Liturgical Forms and Ceremonies

In order to preserve unity in liturgical forms and ceremonies, the synod recommends to its congregations that they use the Order of Worship based on the Danish–Norwegian liturgy of 1685 and agenda of 1688, or the Common Order of Worship, as each congregation may decide.

### Chapter II: Application for Membership

Paragraph 1

A congregation wishing to join the synod shall make application to the president. As evidence of the fact that its doctrine, confessions, rites and practices are truly scriptural and evangelical Lutheran, its application shall be accompanied by:

a) a copy of the congregation's articles of incorporation, constitution and bylaws, which must require:
   1) acceptance of the Holy Scriptures as the inspired and inerrant Word of God revealed in the canonical books of the Old and New Testament;
   2) acceptance of all the symbolical books of the Lutheran Church because they are a correct statement of the teaching of Scripture;
   3) that only male members be given the right to speak and vote in formal congregational meetings;
   4) that only those shall be called to preach and teach who subscribe to the confessions and teachings of the synod;
   5) that members of unchristian and false teaching organizations shall not be admitted as members of the congregation;

b) a properly certified declaration that the congregation has subscribed to the constitution and bylaws of the synod at a legally called meeting of the congregation.

c) These documents shall be presented to the synod for action at its convention.

d) Policy and other substantive changes to the documents in a) shall be forwarded to the president of the synod for synodical review.

Paragraph 2

An individual wishing to join the synod shall make application to the president. The application shall be accompanied by a statement declaring the applicant's unconditional acceptance of (subscription to) the doctrines of the Holy Scripture and the confessions of the Lutheran Church set forth in the Book of Concord of 1580. The application should also express acceptance of the doctrinal position of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod as set forth in doctrinal resolutions and statements as well as in its constitution and bylaws.

a) Such application shall be made by:
   1) pastors who are serving member congregations;
   2) pastors who are serving non-member Lutheran congregations;
   3) pastors who are serving independent congregations, the confessions and teachings of which are in agreement with those of the synod;
   4) male teachers who serve schools of member congregations;
   5) male professors who serve educational institutions of the synod;

b) The synod recognizes that there are men and women in special circumstances. These may also make application.

Such applications shall be reviewed and acted on by the synod on an individual basis.

### Chapter III: Activities

The synod shall through its elected boards and committees under the supervision and coordination of its president:

a) promote an ongoing study of the Holy Scriptures (John 5:39);

b) promote the distribution and use of the Holy Scriptures, orthodox books, devotional literature and hymn books;

c) be watchful concerning purity and unity of doctrine (Ephesians 4:3-16; 1 Corinthians 1:10) by studying doctrinal questions which are in special need of study and discussion, trying the spirits (1 John 4:1), and warning against encroaching sects, as well as against errors and unchristian trends (1 Timothy 4:16), in accordance with the Holy Scriptures;
d) establish and promote home and foreign missions;
e) establish, manage and maintain institutions of learning for the training of pastors and teachers and for the general Christian education of its people;
f) promote and support the establishment of Christian Day Schools for the instruction of the young;
g) promote works of charity;
h) establish, gather and administer the funds required for the synod's operation;
i) exercise supervision over the synod's institutions and the work of its pastors and the practice of its members which is carried out by the president with the assistance of officers and circuit visitors. The visitors are clergy who are elected by the synod and serve under the jurisdiction of the president (see paragraph c above);
j) promote one General Pastoral Conference to be held annually and at least one pastoral conference in each circuit, and
k) in accordance with the Scriptures (Galatians 6:1-2) serve to mediate in controversies which may arise in the synod or within its membership.

## Chapter IV: Conventions

Paragraph 1

The synodical convention shall be held during the third full week of June [i.e. beginning the third Sunday], unless decided otherwise by the previous convention."

Paragraph 2

Member congregations should make every effort to be represented at the synodical conventions by their pastor(s) and by two duly elected delegates. In order that they might properly represent their congregation, the delegates shall be lay voting members of the congregation and shall be elected by the voting membership of the congregation. The delegates shall present their credentials to the convention for action. The pastors serving member congregations who are in attendance at the convention and the properly seated delegates constitute the voting membership of the convention.

a) A clergy member with emeritus status, who is serving a vacancy at the time of a convention, shall have the right to vote at the synod convention, with the vacancy congregation(s) providing convention fees and expenses.
b) Those who are on the ELS clergy roster are ordinarily not to be elected as lay delegates.
    1) Pastors emeriti serving as lay delegates shall receive lay delegate equalization.
    2) Those on the ELS clergy roster may not be elected to lay positions on synod boards or committees.
c) A quorum, a majority of the voting members, shall be necessary for conducting business.
d) The president shall have the right to vote only to break a tie.

Paragraph 3

Special conventions shall be held
a) when a regular convention so decides,
b) when at least one-third of the congregations so request, or
c) when the president, in concurrence with the Board of Trustees, calls for such a convention.

Normally, the delegates and committees of the previous regular convention shall serve at such special conventions.

Paragraph 4

Male members holding individual membership in the synod are advisory members to the convention and may serve on its committees. The convention shall decide who, in addition to the voting and advisory members, shall be given the right to speak.

## Chapter V: Sphere of Jurisdiction of the Convention

Paragraph 1

The synodical conventions shall work to attain the purposes outlined in Chapter III of the constitution and to that end shall:

a) review the activities of the synod as conducted by its officers, boards and committees during the previous year;
b) by careful planning and proper resolutions arrange for the future work of the synod;
c) elect a president, a vice president and a secretary of the synod;
d) elect such boards and committees as the synod may determine. Only those may serve on its boards and committees who are members of the synod, and men of good repute.

Paragraph 2

Convention business shall be conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order unless modified by the Bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod or its guidelines.

Paragraph 3

With relation to the several congregations, the above-mentioned conventions are but advisory assemblies. Therefore, if a congregation believes that a (Synod) decision is in conflict with the Word of God, or finds that it does not serve its interests under the circumstances peculiar to it, the congregation should announce this to the presiding officer of the respective convention, and give its reasons for its opinion. If it does not make such announcement within six months after the secretary has published the decision of the Synod, the decision shall be considered accepted by the congregation, and it shall strive to implement it.

## Chapter VI: Election of Officers and Trustees

Paragraph 1

The president, vice president and secretary of the synod shall be nominated and elected by ballot for a term of four (4) years and shall enter upon the duties of their respective offices on the first day of the second month following the conclusion of the convention at which they are elected. At the regular convention at which these bylaws are ratified the president and the vice president shall be elected for terms of four (4) years and the secretary for a term of (2) years. Thereafter all officers shall be elected for four (4) year terms as their terms expire. To the office of president and vice president only such men who are ordained members of the clergy of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod and who have served in the parish ministry of the synod may be elected and may serve. To the office of secretary only such men may be elected and may serve as are members of a congregation holding membership in the synod.

Paragraph 2

In electing the other trustees, the normal procedure for nominations shall be followed and the vote shall be by ballot. These shall be elected for a term of three (3) years; two (2) being elected at each annual convention of the synod and a third one in the year the constitution is ratified and each third year thereafter.

Paragraph 3

For the election of officers and trustees a majority of votes cast is required.

Paragraph 4

In the event of the president's death or resignation, or his inability to fulfill the duties of his office when certified by resolution of two-thirds of the Board of Trustees, the vice president shall succeed to the office of president. Other vacancies on the Board of Trustees, including those of the synodical vice president and secretary shall be filled by appointment of the Board of Trustees, and those appointed shall serve until the synod's next regular convention, when successors shall be elected for any unexpired portion of the term. The president and secretary thus appointed shall be president and secretary of the Board of Trustees also.

## Chapter VII: Jurisdiction and Duties of the Officers

Paragraph 1: President

The duties of the president shall be:

a) Concerning conventions:
   1) to call the conventions of the synod in accordance with the provisions of Chapter IV, Paragraph 2;
   2) to preside at the conventions of the synod;
   3) to select the theme and essayist for the convention;
   4) to present a slate of nominations for the convention committees;
   5) to report to each regular convention on his work as well as on the condition of the synod in general;

b) to supervise the work of the synod and of its elected boards and committees (see Chapter III of these bylaws), of which boards and committees he is a non-voting advisory member by virtue of his office;

c) to appoint replacements to the synod's boards and committees when vacancies occur unless excepted by these bylaws; which appointees shall serve until the next regular convention,
   1) If a board or committee is not scheduled to meet before the next convention following the date of the vacancy, the position shall be filled by the next annual convention.
   2) A vacancy more than six months before the next annual synod convention should be filled by the president.
   3) If a vacancy occurs less than six months before the next convention and the president determines that the vacancy will harm the work of the body, he shall fill the vacancy by appointment; if the vacancy will not harm the work, it remains until the next election.
   4) At no time should a board or committee be lacking more than 25 percent of its elected membership unless it has no scheduled meetings.

d) Pastoral oversight
   1) to ascertain that candidates for the office of the ministry have been properly examined.
   2) to arrange for the colloquies of pastors and teachers who desire to join the synod (see Guidelines for the Colloquy Committee).
   3) to be present at least at the regular pastoral conferences (see Guidelines for the General Pastoral Conference).

e) to provide advisory lists of suitable candidates to fill vacancies in the offices of pastors and teachers (see Guidelines for Pastor or Teacher Vacancy).

f) to supervise the work of the circuit visitors.

g) to order the periodical review of guidelines as necessary.

h) to represent the synod in all other areas of its concern.

Paragraph 2: Vice president

The duties of the vice president shall be:

a) to serve as an advisory member to the Board of Trustees;

b) to perform such functions as the president may assign to him; and,

c) to serve as president when the president is unable to fulfill the duties of his office.

d) to serve on the Colloquy Committee (see Guidelines for the Colloquy Committee, Article II, A, 2).

Paragraph 3: Secretary

The duties of the secretary shall be:

a) to keep the minutes of the synodical conventions and provide for publication of the proceedings;

b) to prepare such communications from the synod as it or its president may direct;

c) to announce time, place and agenda of synodical conventions;

d) to keep a record of all transactions of the Board of Trustees and have the custody of the corporate seal;

e) to serve as statistician for the synod and compile a parochial report based on data annually submitted by congregations.

f) to insert adopted amendments into the official documents of the synod. Administrative, editorial and other non-policy changes may be authorized by only the synod secretary, who shall consider recommendations of the Synod Review Committee (see General Synodical Guidelines, Article III.A, and Guidelines for the Synod Review Committee, Article II.C).

g) to review amendments that do not concern synod policy, recommended by the Synod Review Committee, and insert them in the appropriate documents. (See General Synodical Guidelines, Article

III.A.3; Guidelines for the Synod Review Committee, Article II.C; SR 2012, pp.146–147, Res. 9, p.148.)

Paragraph 4: Circuit Visitors

a) The synod is divided into circuits, which are not governing divisions (i.e., districts) of the synod, for the purpose of carrying out the work of the synod president (see Guidelines for the Circuit Visitors and Visitations).

b) Circuit visitors are responsible to the synod president to assist him in his supervisory work with the clergy and congregations (see Guidelines for the Circuit Visitors and Visitations, Article II.A.) There shall be a visitor and an alternate visitor elected to three-year terms for each circuit. (See Paragraph 1.)

Paragraph 5: Discipline or Removal from Office

Officers, duly elected under the terms and conditions of The Constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod and its bylaws, are subject to the bylaws and guidelines of the synod as they have been approved by various conventions. These officers, subject to the same human strengths and frailties as other men, and likely being subject to more serious attacks by Satan, must, when necessary, be subject to church discipline. Love for the man, the office that he serves, the synod and the Word of God must be at the heart of all disciplinary proceedings. "This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you" (John 15:12).

In respect for the Eighth Commandment, any charges or assertions that are made must be specifically witnessed. Luther has written "God does not want the reputation, good name, and upright character of our neighbor taken away or diminished…Here belongs particularly the detestable, shameful vice of speaking behind a person's back and slandering, to which the devil spurs us on."[1]

The synod may suspend an officer if, after due admonition, he persists in teaching or acting contrary to the synod's confessional standard or persists without repentance in an immoral action or behavior. In certain cases, a substantiated public immoral action may require immediate dismissal from his office.

The following guidelines apply to the president, the vice president and secretary in their capacity only as elected officers of the synod.

a) The secretary, after being informed in writing by two or more synod members, clergy or lay, that there may be just cause for the president to be disciplined or removed from office, shall inform the officer and shall consult with the circuit visitor of the president. Included among reasons that could support such a charge or assertion are physical or mental incompetence, or the failure or inability to fulfill the duties as required in this Constitution, its Bylaws and Guidelines.

1) The secretary and the circuit visitor shall review the charges or assertions and they may interview people who have knowledge of, or direct involvement in, the case. If the secretary and the circuit visitor determine that the charges or assertions are without merit, they shall so inform the president and the persons making the charges or assertions. The report shall include the reasons for the decision.

2) If the secretary and the circuit visitor determine that the charges or assertions warrant further investigation, they shall refer the matter to the Board of Trustees who shall appoint a committee to make a determination concerning the ability of the president to continue in office. The committee shall be composed of the circuit visitor, three additional clergymen and a layman; one of those appointed shall be a member of the Doctrine Committee and one shall be a pastor emeritus. The secretary shall not be a member of the committee. No one appointed shall be a party involved in the case. The conduct of the review shall rest solely with the committee. It shall have the right and authority to examine all pertinent evidence and to require such testimony which in its judgment is relevant. If the charges or assertions are found to be without merit, the committee shall inform the president, the secretary and the persons making the charges or assertions. The report shall include the reasons for the decision. If the charges are found to be substantiated, the committee shall notify the president and the secretary and forward its determination to the Board of Trustees who shall issue a decision which may be removal from office or the taking of another action, keeping in mind the requirements of the Bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Chapter VI, Paragraph 4.

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1 *Concordia, the Lutheran Confessions*, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, MO, 2006, The Large Catechism, The Ten Commandments, 256, 264, pp. 388–389.

Should the president be removed from office, see Guidelines for the Synod's Relationship to its Executive Officers, Article I.E.4.

b) The president, after being informed in writing by two or more synod members, clergy or lay, that there may be just cause for the vice president to be disciplined or removed from office, shall inform the officer and shall consult with the circuit visitor of the vice president. Included among reasons that could support such a charge or assertion are physical or mental incompetence, or the failure or inability to fulfill the duties as required in this Constitution, its Bylaws and Guidelines.

1) The president and the circuit visitor shall review the charges or assertions and they may interview people who have knowledge of, or direct involvement in, the case. If the president and the circuit visitor determine that the charges or assertions are without merit, they shall so inform the vice president and the persons making the charges or assertions. The report shall include the reasons for the decision.

2) If the president and the circuit visitor determine that the charges or assertions warrant further investigation, they shall refer the matter to the Board of Trustees who shall appoint a committee to make a determination concerning the ability of the vice president to continue in office. The committee shall be composed of the circuit visitor, three additional clergymen and one layman; one of those appointed shall be a member of the Doctrine Committee and one shall be a pastor emeritus. The president shall not be a member of the committee. No one appointed shall be a party involved in the case. The conduct of the review shall rest solely with the committee. It shall have the right and authority to examine all pertinent evidence and to require such testimony which in its judgment is relevant. If the charges or assertions are found to be without merit, the committee shall inform the vice president, the president and the persons making the charges or assertions. The report shall include the reasons for the decision. If the charges or assertions are found to be substantiated, the committee shall notify the vice president and the president and forward its determination to the Board of Trustees, who shall issue a decision which may be removal from office or the taking of another action, keeping in mind the requirements of the Bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Chapter VI, Paragraph 4.

c) The president, after being informed in writing by two or more synod members, clergy or lay, that there may be just cause for the secretary to be disciplined or removed from office, shall inform the officer and shall consult with the circuit visitor of the secretary. Included among reasons that could support such a charge or assertion are physical or mental incompetence, or the failure or inability to fulfill the duties as required in this Constitution, its Bylaws and Guidelines.

1) The president and the circuit visitor shall review the charges or assertions and they may interview people who have knowledge of, or a direct involvement in, the case. If the president and the circuit visitor determine that the charges or assertions are without merit, they shall so inform the secretary and the persons making the charges or assertions. The report shall include the reasons for the decision.

2) If the president and the circuit visitor believe that the charges or assertions warrant further investigation, they shall refer the matter to the Board of Trustees who shall appoint a committee to make a determination concerning the secretary's ability to continue in office. The committee shall be composed of the circuit visitor, three additional clergymen and one layman; one of those appointed shall be a member of the Doctrine Committee and one shall be a pastor emeritus. The president shall not be a member of the committee. No one appointed shall be a party involved in the case. The conduct of the review shall rest solely with the committee. It shall have the right and authority to examine all pertinent evidence and to require such testimony which in its judgment is relevant. If the charges or assertions are found to be without merit, the committee shall inform the secretary, the president and the persons making the charges or assertions. The report shall include the reasons for the decision. If the charges or assertions are found to be substantiated, the committee shall notify the secretary and the president and forward its determination to the Board of Trustees who shall issue a decision which may be removal from office or the taking of another action, keeping in mind the requirements of the Bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Chapter VI, Paragraph 4.

d) The synod treasurer is not an elected officer but is appointed by the Board of Trustees (Guidelines for the Board of Trustees, Article II.D).

e) If the charges or assertions have been made public and are frivolous or not substantiated, the matter should be reported to the synod to the extent that it has been made public.

f) When it is necessary for the Board of Trustees to discuss a matter under a.2, b.2 or c.2 of this paragraph, the officers should absent themselves from the meeting. The meeting shall be chaired by a member chosen by the board.

g) An officer who has undergone disciplinary action under these bylaws shall have the right to appeal to the synod according to the Guidelines for Synodical Discipline and Appeal, Article V.D to H as amended. All evidence gathered in the preceding actions shall be forwarded to the Commission on the Appeal. If a president or vice president is making the appeal, the appeal should be addressed to the secretary. If it is the secretary making the appeal, the appeal should be addressed to the president.

h) If there is an appeal from the decision determined under these guidelines, the members selected on the Commission on the Appeal shall not be members of the committee in a.2, b.2 or c.2.

i) The Board of Trustees shall include in its report to the next regular synod convention any actions that have been taken under the provisions of Chapter VII, Paragraph 5.

**Chapter VIII: Amendments**

Amendments to these bylaws may be made in the following manner:

Resolutions for amendments are to be presented to a regular convention, and if adopted by a two-thirds majority vote, shall become amendments to the bylaws.

Amended

Chapter VII, Paragraph 5: 2011 Synod Report, pages 123–126
Chapter IV, Paragraph 2, b: 2012 Synod Report, pages 187–188
Chapter II, Paragraph 1: 2014 Synod Report, page 128
Chapter II, Paragraph 1, a, c, and d: 2014 Synod Report, page 128
Chapter II, Paragraph 2: 2014 Synod Report, page 128
Chapter III, i: 2014 Synod Report, pages 128–129
Chapter VII, Paragraph 1: 2014 Synod Report, page 128
Chapter VII, Paragraph 2, d: 2014 Synod Report, page 128
Chapter VII, Paragraph 3, f, g: 2014 Synod Report, page 128
Chapter V, Paragraph 2: 2014 Synod Report, page 129
Chapter VII, Paragraph 4: 2014 Synod Report, page 129
Chapter VII, Paragraph 5: 2015 Synod Report, page 123
Chapter IV, Paragraph 2: 2017 Synod Report, page 148
Chapter VII, Paragraph 4: 2017 Synod Report, page 148
Chapter IV, Paragraph 2: 2018 Synod Report, page 157
Chapter IV, Paragraph 1: 2025 Synod Report, page 187
Chapter V, Paragraph 1, e (striken): 2025 Synod Report, page 187

# Section 130
# Articles of Incorporation of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod Foundation

The undersigned, being of lawful age, for the purpose of forming a nonprofit corporation under and pursuant to the provisions of the Minnesota Nonprofit Corporation Act, being Chapter 317, Minnesota Statutes, do hereby adopt the following Articles of Incorporation:

**Article I**

The name of this Foundation shall be the Evangelical Lutheran Synod Foundation.

**Article II**

The Evangelical Lutheran Synod Foundation shall be formed and shall operate exclusively for the benefit of, and to carry out the purposes of, the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, a Minnesota nonprofit corporation, its successors and assigns, as long as the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, its successors and assigns, meet the qualifications described in section 509(a)(1) of the Internal Revenue code of 1954, as now enforced or hereafter amended. The foundation shall solicit gifts and bequests and shall use these funds exclusively for the benefit of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, its successors and assigns.

**Article III**

No part of the net earnings of the foundation shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to, its members, trustees, directors, officers, or other private persons, except that the foundation shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in Article II hereof. No substantial part of the activities of the foundation shall be the carrying on of propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and the foundation shall not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office.

**Article IV**

The duration of this foundation shall be perpetual.

**Article V**

The registered office of this foundation shall be at 6 Browns Court, in Mankato, Blue Earth County, Minnesota.

**Article VI**

The affairs of the foundation shall be managed by a board of trustees. The trustees shall be elected by the members, and the manner of their election, together with their terms of office and number, shall be prescribed by the bylaws. The first Board of Trustees shall consist of the following nine (9) individuals who shall hold office until the foundation's first annual meeting or until their successors are elected and qualified:

Rev. George Orvick
2670 Milwaukee Street
Madison, WI 53704

Rev. Alf Merseth
106 13th St. So.
Northwood, IA 50459

Leroy Meyer
1038 South Lewis Avenue
Lombard, IL 60148

Bernard Bogeskov
P.O. Box 20010
Bloomington, MN 55343

Earl Aasen

Mayville, ND 58257

Rev. Wilfrid Frick
Box 279
602 6th Street
Parkersburg, IA 50665

Albin Levorson, Jr.
Northwood, IA 50459

Ralph Olson
1116 Lakewood
Albert Lea, MN 56007

Wilbur G. Lieske
9 Skyline Drive
Mankato, MN 56001

**Article VII**

The members of the foundation shall not be personally liable for foundation obligations.

**Article VIII**

The foundation shall be organized on a membership basis, and shall have no capital stock. The terms, number and other qualifications for membership herein shall be established by the bylaws.

**Article IX**

The name and post office address of each incorporator is as follows:

Rev. George Orvick
2670 Milwaukee Street
Madison, WI 53704

Rev. Alf Merseth
106 13th St. So.
Northwood, IA 50459

Wilbur G. Lieske
9 Skyline Drive
Mankato, MN 56001

**Article X**

Upon dissolution, termination or winding up of this foundation in any manner or for any reason whatsoever, the Board of Trustees shall, after paying or making provision for the payment of all liabilities of the foundation, dispose of all the assets of the foundation to the Evangelical Lutheran Synod or to such other organization or organizations organized and operated exclusively for charitable, educational, religious, or scientific purposes as shall at the time qualify as an exempt organization or organizations under section 509(a)(1) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954, as now enforced or hereafter amended, as the trustees shall determine.

**Article XI**

This Foundation shall not afford pecuniary gain, incidentally or otherwise, to its members.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the undersigned incorporators have hereunto set their hands this 6th day of September, 1984

_____
Rev. George Orvick

_____
Rev. Alf Merseth

_____
Wilbur G. Lieske

# Section 131
# Bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod Foundation

### Article I: Membership

A. The members of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod Foundation shall consist of the members of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

B. Membership in the foundation shall not be assignable and will terminate when a person is no longer a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

### Article II: Officers

A. The affairs of the foundation shall be managed and controlled by a board of trustees. Members of the Board of Trustees shall be the members of the Board of Trustees of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, as they shall, from time to time, be elected by the members of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

B. All the corporate powers, except as are otherwise provided for in these bylaws and in the laws of the State of Minnesota, shall be, and are hereby, vested in, and shall be exercised by, the Board of Trustees.

C. The president, vice president, and secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod shall be the officers of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod Foundation.

### Article III: Duties of Officers

A. The president shall preside at all meetings of the foundation and its Board of Trustees. He shall have and exercise general charge and supervision of the affairs of the foundation and shall perform such other duties as may be assigned to him.

B. The vice president shall serve in the absence of the president.

C. The secretary shall serve notice of meetings, shall attend to such correspondence and shall attend to such other duties as are incidental to his office. He shall be responsible for depositing annually with the archivist of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod copies of the minutes and such other material as is pertinent. In case of his inability to serve, the members shall be authorized to select a replacement.

D. The treasurer, appointed by the Board of Trustees of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, shall serve as the treasurer of the foundation. The treasurer shall have the care and custody of all funds and securities of the foundation and shall deposit or invest the same in the name of the foundation as the trustees may determine. He shall keep or cause to be kept a complete and accurate account of all receipts and disbursements, resources and liabilities of the foundation and shall render to the chairman or to the Board of Trustees, whenever they shall require it, correct statements showing the financial condition of the foundation.

### Article IV: Meetings

A. The annual meeting of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod Foundation shall be held in conjunction with the annual meeting of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

B. Special meetings of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod Foundation may be held in conjunction with special meetings of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod. (see Bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Chapter IV, Paragraph 3)

### Article V: Foundation Investment Committee

A. Membership

1. The Foundation Investment Committee shall consist of four (4) members of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod Foundation. Not more than three (3) and not less than two (2) shall be members of the Board of Trustees of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod Foundation.
2. The Board of Trustees shall elect the members of the Foundation Investment Committee. These positions shall be filled as their terms expire.
3. The committee shall elect a chairman and a secretary from within its own membership. The president of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod shall be an ex officio member of the committee.

B. Duties

1. The committee shall be responsible for managing the assets and investments of the foundation. It shall perform any other assignments given to it by the Board of Trustees and shall report its actions to the regular meetings of the Board of Trustees for review.

2. It shall meet as often as necessary.

**Article VI: Distribution of Funds**

The trustees shall annually distribute to the synod, or reinvest for the synod, all the net income of the foundation and shall report such action to the synod.

**Article VII: Administration of Specially Financed Programs**

A. For each specially financed program, a fund shall be established in the general accounting records of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod Foundation. Each fund shall be identified either as an endowment fund that shall be self-perpetuating or as a fund functioning as endowment whose principal and income will be totally expended at some time.

B. The Foundation Investment Committee shall, each November, notify the beneficiary of each fund of the balance that will be available for the next budget year.

C. Dispersal of the available funds shall be at the discretion of the board or committee that controls the specially financed program.

**Article VIII: Seal**

The foundation shall have no seal.

Amended

Article VII: 2015 Synod Report, page 124
Article III: 2018 Synod Report, page 157
Article II: 2024 Synod Report, page 176

## Section 140
# Articles of Incorporation of Missions Advancement Project, Inc.

The undersigned, being of lawful age, for the purpose of forming a non-profit corporation under and pursuant to the provisions of the Minnesota Non-profit Corporation Act in Minnesota Statutes Chapter 317A, does hereby adopt the following Articles of Incorporation:

**Article I**

The name of the Corporation shall be Missions Advancement Project, Inc.

**Article II**

This Corporation is organized exclusively for charitable, educational, or religious purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. The activities of the Corporation will be limited to furnishing support for the Evangelical Lutheran Synod and for organizations which promote the core charitable and religious objectives of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, provided that such organizations are within the purview of Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3).

**Article III**

No part of the net earnings of the Corporation shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to, its members, trustees, directors, officers, or other private persons, except that the Corporation shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in Article II hereof. No substantial part of the activities of the Corporation shall be the carrying on of propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and the Corporation shall not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office.

**Article IV**

The duration of this Corporation shall be perpetual.

**Article V**

The registered office of this Corporation shall be at 6 Browns Court, Mankato, Blue Earth County, Minnesota 56001.

**Article VI**

The affairs of this Corporation shall be managed by a Board of Directors, a majority of which shall at all times consist of persons appointed by the Evangelical Lutheran Synod. The terms of office and number of Directors shall be prescribed by the By-Laws. The first Board of Directors shall consist of the following individual who shall hold office until the Corporation's first meeting or until his successors are elected and qualified:

Steven Paul Petersen

**Article VII**

The Corporation shall not have members.

**Article VIII**

The name and post office address of the incorporator is as follows:
Steven Paul Petersen
6 Browns Court
Mankato, MN 56001

**Article IX**

Upon dissolution, termination or winding up of this Corporation in any manner or for any reason whatsoever, the Board of Directors shall, after paying or making provision for the payment of all liabilities of the Corporation, dispose of all the assets of the Corporation by distributing them to the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, provided that if the Evangelical Lutheran Synod is not then in existence, then to such organization or organizations organized and operated exclusively for charitable, educational, or religious purposes consistent with the goals and objectives of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod,

as shall at the time qualify under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, or the corresponding provisions of any future United States Internal Revenue law.

**Article X**

No Director shall be personally liable to the Corporation for monetary damages for a breach of fiduciary duty as a Director, except that the foregoing shall not eliminate or limit such Director's liability to the Corporation for monetary damages for the following: (1) any breach of such Director's duty of loyalty to the Corporation, (2) any of such Director's acts or omissions not in good faith or which involve intentional misconduct or a knowing violation of a law, (3) acts specified in Minn. Stat. 317A.521 et seq., as it now exists or hereafter may be amended (regarding a Director's assent to or participation in the making of any loan by the Corporation to any Director or officer of the Corporation), or (4) any transaction from which such Director derived an improper personal benefit. If the Minnesota Non-profit Corporation Act hereafter is amended to authorize the further elimination or limitation of the liability of Directors, then the liability of a Director of the Corporation, in addition to the limitations on personal liability provided herein, shall be further eliminated or limited to the fullest extent permitted by the Minnesota Non-profit Corporation Act. Any repeal or modification of this Article XI shall be prospective only and shall not adversely affect any right or protection of a Director of the Corporation existing at the time of such repeal or modification.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the undersigned incorporator has hereunto set his hand this 1st day of April, 1999.
Steven P. Petersen (signed)
Steven P. Petersen

STATE OF MINNESOTA
ss.
COUNTY OF BLUE EARTH

On the 1st day of April, 1999, before me a notary public within and for said county and state, personally appeared Steven P. Petersen, to me known to be the person described in and who executed the foregoing instrument and acknowledged that he executed it as his own free act and deed.

Dawn Krahmer (signed)
Notary (seal)

# Section 141
# Bylaws of Missions Advancement Project, Inc.

### Article I: Identification

Section 1.01 Name.
The name of the Corporation is Missions Advancement Project, Inc. (hereinafter referred to as Corporation).

Section 1.02 Registered Office.
The address of the registered office of the Corporation is:
6 Browns Court
Mankato, MN 56001

Section 1.03 Seal.
The Corporation shall have no corporate seal.

Section 1.04 Other Business Offices.
The Corporation may have business offices at such other places, either within or without the State of Minnesota, as the Board of Directors may designate or as the business of the Corporation may require from time to time.

### Article II: Financial

Section 2.01 Fiscal Year.
The fiscal year of the Corporation shall begin on the first day of January each year and shall end on the last day of December in each year.

Section 2.02 Corporate Monies.
The monies of the Corporation shall be deposited in the name of the Corporation in such bank or banks as the Board of Directors shall designate and shall be withdrawn only by person designated by resolution of the Board of Directors.

Section 2.03 Books and Records.
The books and record of the Corporation shall be kept at the Corporate registered office as designated in Article I.

Section 2.04 Annual Audit.
The Board of Directors may employ qualified accountants for the purpose of conducting an annual review upon the books and records of the Corporation.

Section 2.05 Capital Stock.
The Corporation shall have no capital stock.

### Article III: Members

Section 3.01 Members.
The Corporation shall not have members.

### Article IV: Purpose

Section 4.01 Purpose.
This Corporation is organized exclusively for charitable, educational, and religious purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. The activities of the Corporation will be limited to furnishing support for the Evangelical Lutheran Synod and the organizations and entities that promote the core charitable, educational, and religious objectives of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

**Article V: Board of Directors**

Section 5.01 Number and Qualification and Powers.

The management of all the property, affairs and business of this Corporation shall be vested in its Board of Directors. A majority of the Board of Directors shall be laymen (non-clergy). This Directors shall be voting members of the congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod. The Board of Directors shall consist of five (5) members: two (2) clergy and three (3) laymen.

Section 5.02 Election.

The Board of Directors of this Corporation shall be appointed by the Board of Trustees of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS). A majority of the Board of Directors shall be appointed from among a list of candidates nominated by the ELS Board of Trustees, one of which shall be clergy. The remaining Directors shall be appoint by the Board of Trustees from a list of nominees submitted by the supported organizations. For the Corporation's first Board of Directors, five persons shall be appointed, two of the Directors shall be appointed for a one-year term, two of the Directors shall be appointed for a two-year term, and one of the Directors shall be appointed for a three-year term. Thereafter, all Directors shall be appointed for three-year terms. In addition, the President of the ELS shall be an ex officio member of the Board of Directors.

Section 5.03 Vacancy.

Any vacancy occurring in the Board of Directors, whether caused by resignation, death or otherwise, shall be filled when a successor to the vacating Director is appointed to the Board of Directors of the Corporation by the ELS Board of Trustees.

Section 5.04 Duties and Powers of the Board.

Directors shall have all the powers, duties and obligations granted them under the Minnesota Non-profit Corporation Act and shall have authority to maintain and operate the Corporation. The powers of the Board shall include, but not be limited to, the following powers:

A. The Board shall have the authority to provide adequate office, service center and administrative facilities by lease, purchase, gift or otherwise, subject to state and federal restrictions on non-profit corporations;
B. The Board is authorized to appoint special committees, advisory councils or task forces;
C. The Board is authorized to employ and fix the salary for such personnel as shall be necessary to provide and support the agreed upon programs and services;
D. The Board may discharge staff and personnel pursuant to provisions of law applicable to non-profit corporations;
E. The Board is authorized to enter into contracts with individuals, public and non-public educational entities, government agencies, profit and non-profit agencies, business and industry;
F. The Board may prosecute in its name and defend or settle actions brought by or against it or its employees; and
G. The Board shall have the authority to indemnify any persons, whether officers, Directors, employees, agents or other persons acting for or on behalf of the Corporation in respect to any and all matters or actions for which indemnification is permitted by the laws of the State of Minnesota, including, without limitation, liability for expenses incurred in defending against actions commenced or threatened. The Board may procure insurance against liability of the Board and of its officers and employees for damages resulting from wrongful acts and omissions of the Board, its officers or employees, whether the act or omissions relate to governmental or proprietary functions of the Board.

Section 5.05 Meetings.

A. Place of Meeting. Meetings of the Board of Directors of the Corporation (annual, regular or special) may be held within or without the State of Minnesota.
B. Regular Meetings. The Board of Directors shall meet periodically but not less than once each year. A meeting may be held in conjunction with the meetings of the ELS Board of Trustees or the annual convention of the ELS.
C. Special Meetings. A special meeting of the Board of Directors may be called by the Chairperson, or in his absence, by the Vice-Chairperson, or any two (2) members of the Board. Notification may be given in writing, by fax, telephone, telegram or personally no later than five (5) days prior to the meeting

date. The call for the special meeting must state the business to be transacted and no business shall be transacted other than that specified in the notice of meeting.

D. Agenda. Agendas for regular and annual meetings shall be sent to each Director at least seven (7) days prior to the meeting of the Board. To the extent that the same may be reasonably possible, matters submitted in the form of resolutions shall appear on the agenda in the form prepared and proposed. Items not on the agenda may be considered at the time of the meeting and added by consent of a majority of the Directors present.

E. Quorum. A simple majority of the Directors shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting of the Board of Directors.

F. Order of Business. The Board of Directors may suspend or modify the usual order of business by mutual agreement or by a majority vote. Customarily, the meeting will open and close with prayer. The usual order of business at such meetings will be as follows:

1. Determination of a quorum and call to order.
2. Approval of Minutes from previous meeting.
3. Acceptance of receipts and approval of expenditures.
4. Unfinished and old business.
5. Open forum for additions to agenda.
6. Reports.
7. Presentation of written communications.
8. New business.
9. Next meeting.
10. Adjournment.

G. Motions. The Minutes shall contain a record of all motions, the names of persons making and seconding the motions, and the action taken on each motion.

H. Minutes of Proceedings. The Minutes of proceedings of the preceding Board meeting shall be approved by the Board and received by each Board member.

I. Voting. Each member of the Board of Directors is entitled to one vote on all affairs of the Corporation.

J. Meeting by Electronic Conference. The Board of Directors may meet and conduct the business of this Corporation by telephone conference or other electronic communication according to Minnesota Statutes §317A.449.

Section 5.06 Committees/Task Forces.

The Board may have standing committee or task forces. The Board shall authorize special committees/task forces as are deemed necessary.

Section 5.07 Standard of Conduct for All Directors.

A Director shall discharge the duties of a Director in good faith, in a manner the Director reasonably believes to be in the best interests of the Corporation and with the care of an ordinarily prudent person in a like position would exercise under similar circumstances.

Section 5.08 Removal.

Any Director may be removed by the majority vote of the Board of Directors whenever, in its best judgment, the best interests of the Corporation would be served thereby. The ELS Board of Trustees may also remove and replace Directors.

## Article VI: The Officers

Section 6.01 Officers.

The officers of the Corporation shall consist of a President, Vice-President, Treasurer and Secretary and such other officers and assistant officers and agents as may be deemed necessary by the Board of Directors. Each of the officers shall be elected by the Board of Directors at the annual meeting. Each of the officers shall serve at the pleasure of the Board of Directors, and may be reimbursed for expenses as may be fixed by the Board. Any officer, except for the President, may hold two offices. The President may or may not be the Chairman of the Board of Directors.

A. President. The President shall:

1. Actively manage the business of the Corporation;

2. When present, preside at all meetings of the Board;
3. Sign and deliver in the name of the Corporation, deeds, mortgages, bonds, contracts or other instrument pertaining to the business of the Corporation, except in cases in which the authority to sign and deliver is required by law to be exercised by another person or is expressly delegated by the Articles of Incorporation or By-Laws or by the Board to some other officer or agent of the Corporation;
4. Maintain records of and whenever necessary, certify all proceedings of the Board; and
5. Perform all such other duties as a incident to the office and/or as prescribed by the Board.

B. Vice-President. The Vice-President shall:
1. Perform the duties of the President in his absence or position vacancy; and
2. Perform other duties as prescribed by the Board or President.

C. Treasurer. The Treasurer, or official designees on behalf of the Treasurer, shall:
1. Keep accurate financial records for the Corporation;
2. Endorse for deposits all notes, checks and drafts received by the Corporation as ordered by the Board, making proper vouchers therefore;
3. Deposit all money, drafts and checks in the name of and to the credit of the Corporation in the banks and depositories designated by the Board;
4. Disburse corporate funds and issue checks in the name of and to the credit of the Corporation in the banks and depositories designated by the Board;
5. Disburse corporate funds and issue checks and drafts in the name of the Corporation, as ordered by the Board;
6. Perform other duties as prescribed by the Board or the President.

D. Secretary. The Secretary shall:
1. Keep the Minutes of the Board of Directors meetings in one or more books provided for that purpose;
2. See that all notices are duly given in accordance with the provisions of these By-laws or as required by law;
3. Act as custodian of the corporate records; and
4. Perform other duties as prescribe by the Board or the President.

Section 6.02 Other Officers.

Other officers elected or appointed by the Board of Directors shall have the powers, rights, duties and responsibilities in terms and office provided for by resolution of the Board of Directors.

Section 6.03 Standard of Conduct for All Officers.

An officer shall discharge the duties of an officer in good faith, in a manner the officer reasonably believes to be in the best interest of the Corporation and with the care of an ordinarily prudent person in a like position would exercise under similar circumstances.

Section 6.04 Removal.

Any officer or agent elected or appointed by the Board of Directors may be removed by the Board of Directors whenever, in its best judgment, the best interests of the Corporation would be served thereby.

Section 6.05 Vacancies.

A vacancy in any office because of death, resignation, illness, removal, disqualification or otherwise may be filled by the Board of Directors for the unexpired portion of the term.

Section 6.06 Resignation.

Any officer may resign at any time by giving written notice to the Corporation. The resignation is effective without acceptance when a notice is given to the Corporation unless a later effective date is specified in the notice.

Section 6.07 Delegation of Authority.

In cases of absence of any officer of the Corporation, or for any other reason that the Board may deem sufficient, the Board may delegate the powers and duties of such officer to any Director who is not any officer of the Corporation, for the time being provided a majority of the entire Board concurs therein.

**Article VII: Staff**

Section 7.01 Corporation Needs.

The Corporation shall, as directed by the Board of Directors, employ staff as needed for carrying out the purposes of this Corporation.

Section 7.02 "Staff" Defined.

Staff shall include employees and other qualified individuals or organizations who may from time to time contract with the Corporation. Full-time and part-time staff shall be qualified based upon education, experience and/or opinion of the Board of Directors.

**Article VIII: Salary and Expenses**

Section 8.01 Business-Related Expenses.

Directors, officers and staff shall be entitled to reimbursement for all reasonable travel and related expense incurred in attendance at meetings and in the performance of duties on behalf of the Corporation. Schedules of reimbursable expense shall be established by the Corporation from time to time.

Section 8.02 Salary.

No state salary shall be paid Directors for their services, but, by resolution of the Board of Directors, expenses may be reimbursed for attendance at each annual, regular or special meeting of such Board; provided that nothing herein contained shall be construed to preclude any Director from serving the Corporation in any other capacity and receiving compensation therefore.

Section 8.03 Salaries.

The salaries of the officers shall be fixed from time to time by the Board of Directors and no officer shall be prevented from receiving such salary by reason of the fact that the person is also a Director of the Corporation.

**Article IX: Amendment of the Bylaws**

Section 9.01 Process.

Alterations, amendments or repeal of the Bylaws may be accomplished by a majority vote of the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors may not adopt, amend, or repeal a Bylaw fixing a quorum for meetings of board members, prescribing procedures for removing directors or filling vacancies in the Board of Directors, or fixing the number of directors or their classifications, qualifications or terms of office, but may adopt or amend a Bylaw to increase the number of Directors as long as a majority of which are appointed by the ELS Board of Trustees.

**Article X: Disallowed Expenditures**

Section 10.01 Net Earnings.

No part of the net earnings of the Corporation shall inure to the benefit of or be distributed to any officer or Director of the Corporation, or any individual (except that reasonable compensation shall be paid for services rendered to or for the benefit of the Corporation affecting one or more of its purposes), and no Director or officer of the Corporation or any individual shall be entitled to share in any distribution of any of the Corporate assets on dissolution of the Corporation or otherwise.

Section 10.02 Reimbursement.

Any compensatory payments for services rendered made to a Director, officer or employee of the Corporation which shall be a violation of the above restriction, or disallowed in whole or in part as a deductible expense for federal income tax purposes shall be reimbursed to the Corporation by such person to the full extent of the disallowance, together with interest thereon at the rate then in effect for interest on federal income tax deficiencies from the date of payment to the date of reimbursement, within sixty (60) days of notice to such person by the Board of Directors. Notice shall be promptly given upon a determination, as defined in Section 1313(a) of Internal Revenue Code 1986 (as now in effect and hereafter amended), that such payment shall be disallowed in whole or in part as a deductible expense for federal income tax purposes. It shall be the duty of the Board of Directors to enforce payment by such person of each such amount disallowed. In lieu of payment by such person, subject to the approval of the Board of Directors, proportionate amounts

may be withheld from such person's future compensation payments until the full amount owed to the Corporation has been recovered. Reimbursement of such disallowed expenses shall constitute a condition of employment for all employees.

These Bylaws were adopted as and for the Bylaws of a Minnesota corporation, at the First Meeting of the Board of Directors held on the ____ day of _____, 1999.

# Section 142
# Guidelines for Missions Advancement Project, Inc.

*(adopted 2009 Synod Report, pages 122–123)*

### Article I: Organization and Membership

A. Missions Advancement Project, Inc., is an entity created by the Board of Trustees of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod on April 1, 1999, and which thereby operates under the auspices of the board.

B. Missions Advancement Project, Inc. is organized exclusively for charitable, educational, and religious purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Service code.

C. The members of the Missions Advancement Project, Inc. Board of Directors are appointed by the Board of Trustees of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod for three-year terms. The Board of Directors shall consist of five (5) members: two (2) clergy and three (3) laymen. The president of the synod is an ex officio member of the Board of Directors.

D. The Board of Directors of Missions Advancement Project, Inc. shall elect its own president, vice president, treasurer and secretary.

### Article II: Activities and Duties of the Board

A. Missions Advancement Project, Inc. shall limit its activities to furnishing support for the synod and the organizations and entities that promote the core charitable, educational, and religious objectives of the synod.

B. Missions Advancement Project, Inc. shall receive and consider funding requests from such organizations and entities.

### Article III: Meetings

The Missions Advancement Project, Inc. Board of Directors shall meet at least once per year.

# Administrative Guidelines

# Section 210
# General Synodical Guidelines

### Article I: Status of Professors on the Synodical Boards and Committees

Theologically trained professors of the college and seminary are to be considered clergy as to elections to the boards and committees of the synod.

### Article II: Assigning Congregations to Circuits

As each new congregation is accepted into membership in the synod, the synod secretary shall assign it to one of the circuits of the synod. A specific assignment may be appealed by the congregation. A realignment of circuits may be adopted at any convention of the synod provided that notice of the proposed realignment has been recommended by the Synod Review Committee and published in the *Book of Reports and Memorials*.

### Article III: General Policies Regarding Standing Boards and Committees

*(amended 2003 Synod Report, page 139)*
*(amended 2012 Synod Report, page 146)*

A. Amendments to Guidelines:
   1. Guidelines may be amended by vote of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod in convention, provided that notice of each proposed amendment was given in the *Book of Reports and Memorials*.
   2. All amendments concerning synodical policy in legal or policy documents will be approved by a synod convention.
   3. Changes or corrections that do not concern synodical policy, such as the renumbering of guidelines articles, corrections in punctuation and typographical errors, etc., shall be made by the Synod Review Committee and forwarded to the synod secretary for his review, approval and inclusion into the appropriate document.

B. Effective Date for Guidelines and Amendments: New guidelines or amendments become effective upon approval by the convention unless otherwise specified in the resolution of approval.

C. Duties of Board and Committee Secretaries: The secretary shall record all resolutions of the board or committee and keep such minutes as shall be pertinent to its business. He shall supply copies of the minutes to all members of the board or committee, the synod's president, vice president and secretary and others authorized by board or committee resolution. He shall prepare the report of the board or committee for the convention and have the minutes of the previous year available for the convention review committee. In addition, the secretary shall be responsible for annually depositing pertinent documents, or copies, with the archivist of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod which shall include minutes and such other material as the secretary deems necessary.

D. Removal of Board and Committee Members: Voting members of the corporation, in convention, may remove a member or an entire board or committee, from office for cause, provided that the notice of the meeting shall state the reasons for removal. The action for removal must be a part of the proposed agenda for the meeting. Such action for removal must be by a two-thirds majority vote of the certified voters of the convention. (For "voting members," see Bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Chapter IV, Paragraph 2.)

E. Authority for Establishing Subcommittees: In order to properly and effectively perform assigned tasks, boards and committees may appoint permanent or temporary subcommittees. Each subcommittee should be provided a mission statement, have a designated length of life and a designated number of members. Ordinarily, temporary subcommittees should have a life of not more than one year. Following a review of its mission and appointed accomplishments, a temporary subcommittee may be reappointed. Other guidelines may state specific provisions regarding subcommittees. This guideline will not relate to inter-board subcommittees that have specific synod-adopted guidelines.

### Article IV: Official Notification(s)

*(adopted 2018 Synod Report, page 157)*

A. The *Lutheran Sentinel* is the publication of record for the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

B. Information concerning pastor and teacher calls by congregations (accepted), lists of institutional nominations (presidents or theological professors), calls to synodical administrators, and successful colloquies should also appear in the synod's publication of record, the *Lutheran Sentinel*.

C. Wherever the Articles of Incorporation, constitutions, by-laws, and guidelines require official publication (such as announcements of meetings, calls for nominations, call lists, notices of colloquies, or other notices), such notices shall be announced by the synodical administration in electronic or printed media that goes to all pastors and congregations of the synod. Where certain lengths of time are specified before action can be taken, that period shall be stated at the time the notice is disseminated by the appropriate synod official.

**Article V: Voting Procedures**

*(adopted 2012 Synod Report, page 145)*
*(amended 2015 Synod Report, page 124)*

A. Voting may be conducted by voice, by raised hands, by standing, by written ballot, or by an electronic means or process that has been approved by the synod's Committee for Communication prior to the current meeting.

B. Unless stated otherwise in the Constitution, its Bylaws, or these guidelines, a simple majority (a vote of fifty percent plus one) shall determine the decision of any election. Should an election end in a tie, the chairman may vote to break the tie or he may order another vote. (See Bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Chapter IV, Paragraph 2.)

C. If there is no majority, another vote of the same nominees will be taken for as many as three additional times. If there is no majority after the fourth ballot, a motion from the floor may request that those names with less than five percent of the total vote be removed from the next ballot. If that motion is defeated, an election using the original candidates will be continued.

D. These procedures shall apply to synod conventions and to the synod's boards and committees insofar as practical. If these provisions are found to be not applicable, there should be a statement in the minutes explaining the reason that another process was used to resolve an election.

E. To elect a Committee on Nominations:

1. No ballot shall be voted until directed by the convention chairman.
2. The first ballot will be a nominating ballot that includes the names of those who are not eligible to serve on the Committee on Nominations, and it will include a space to nominate one clergyman and one layman.
3. Before the first and second election ballots anyone nominated may have his name removed from the ballot.
4. The first election ballot will include a listing of all the clergymen nominated and all the laymen nominated. Any nominee on this ballot and all subsequent ballots for the Committee on Nominations receiving more votes than fifty percent of the total number of ballots counted shall be considered elected.
5. A second election ballot shall be presented showing all unelected nominees except those having less than five votes. The ballot shall have blank spaces for voting equal to the number of offices not filled on the preceding ballot.
6. Subsequent election ballots shall be presented until all eight positions have been elected. During the total election process, the voters will select not more than four clergymen and not more than four laymen.
7. There will be printed on the top of each election ballot the following statement: "Please do not mark the ballot until directed by the convention chairman."

# Section 215
# Guidelines for the Synod's Relationship to its Executive Officers

### Article I: The Office of the President

*(amended 2006 Synod Report, page 168)*
*(amended 2012 Synod Report, page 137)*
*(amended 2022 Synod Report, page 155)*

A. Qualifications
   1. To the office of president, only such clergymen may be elected and may serve as are eligible according to the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.
   2. The president shall subscribe to the confessional principles of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod and to its constitution and bylaws.
   3. He shall have demonstrated administrative and leadership ability.

B. Responsibilities
   1. He shall perform duties assigned to him in the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod. (see Constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Chapter V and Bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Chapter VII, Paragraph 1)
   2. He shall supervise the circuit visitors and the boards and committees of the synod so that the goals and objectives adopted by the synod in convention are achieved insofar as practicable. He shall make appointments of advisory members as he determines them to be necessary. Upon recommendation in written form from a board or committee, he shall name the appointee, the purpose of the appointment or the service that is to be provided, and the effective date of the appointment. Each appointment shall not exceed three years, but it may be renewed. He shall NOT be advisory to a commission on an appeal.
   3. Between conventions he shall communicate to the Board of Trustees such information on his activities and on the condition of the synod as is necessary to assist the board in carrying out its duties.
   4. He shall be directly responsible for all communication for the Evangelical Lutheran Synod. (Some examples of this would be *Lutheran Sentinel*, *Synod Report*, website, president's newsletter, ELS Video Link, bulletin inserts, additional Christian publications, etc.)
   5. In his report to the convention each year, the president shall include an update on general communication for the synod and any necessary changes to recommend. The report will be included in the President's Report.
   6. When future overseas mission fellowship requests occur, the president shall establish a due diligence panel as needed (see Guidelines for Overseas Fellowship, Article I).

C. Election to Office and Establishment of Compensation
   1. He shall be elected to office in accordance with the constitution, bylaws and guidelines of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.
   2. His salary, fringe benefits and other considerations for the office of president will be established by the Board of Trustees prior to the convention at which his election takes place and these, along with an appropriate diploma of vocation, will be presented to him upon his election to the office. For the remainder of his term of office, the remuneration package shall be reviewed annually by the Board of Trustees at its regular meeting in November.
   3. His term of office shall begin on August 1st following the convention at which he is elected, and an appropriate acknowledgement of his election to office shall be planned and conducted by the Board of Trustees.

D. Location of Office and Other Considerations
   1. The location of the office for the president shall be at the synod headquarters.
   2. Housing for the president will be provided in a synod-owned residence or by a housing allowance.
   3. The synod will provide an office, equipment, supplies and secretarial help for the office of president.
   4. The synod will pay normal travel costs as incurred. Unusual expenditures shall require prior approval by the Board of Trustees.

5. The president will be entitled to four weeks paid vacation each year. It shall be scheduled in consultation with the vice president and the secretary of the synod.

E. Terms and Conditions if the Office of President is Vacated

1. In the case of resignation or the incumbent declining renomination:
   a. Salary, fringe benefits and office accommodations shall end on the effective date of his resignation or when the term of office expires.
   b. Housing benefits will end on the 31st of July following the convention at which a successor is elected or no more than 60 days after the effective date of his resignation.
2. In the case of an extended illness, the Board of Trustees shall make appropriate provisions for the support of the president while he is unable to perform the duties of his office.
3. If a president is not re-elected to the office, the synod will provide for the outgoing president for a period of up to six months, or until a new call is accepted; whichever comes first:
   a. One half salary.
   b. Full health and life insurance.
   c. Full retirement benefits.
   d. Housing or housing allowance, granted that the out-going president may be required to vacate synod-provided housing by July 31st following the convention, in which case a housing allowance would be provided.
4. In the case of involuntary removal from office and unless otherwise specified in the resolution of removal, all benefits and other compensation will cease on the last day of the month following the action removing him from office, except that synod-provided housing and salary will be available for not less than 30 days.
5. Needs that may arise in special or unusual circumstances will be provided for by the Board of Trustees in consultation with the Board for Christian Service.

**Article II: The Office of the Secretary**

The synod shall provide for necessary clerical assistance to the office of the secretary and, if he is a pastor, shall be ready to provide the assistance of a vicar for the secretary when this is needed and applied for. The approval of such arrangement and cost shall be the responsibility of the Board of Trustees. The amount of the honorarium given the secretary shall be reviewed and determined by the Board of Trustees annually. The budgeting for this office will be through the Synod Fund.

**Article III: The Office of Treasurer**

For the office of treasurer, the Board of Trustees shall be responsible for providing such clerical assistance as is necessary.

**Article IV: The Office of the Vice-President**

*(amended 2003 Synod Report, page 140)*
*(amended 2015 Synod Report, page 125)*

The vice president shall serve as an advisory member to the Board of Trustees, perform such functions as the president may assign to him, and serve as president when the president is unable to fulfill the duties of his office. The amount of the stipend provided for the vice-president shall be reviewed and determined by the Board of Trustees annually. The budgeting for this office will be through the Synod Fund.

# Section 220
# Guidelines for Synodical Membership

*(adopted 2008 Synod Report, pages. 147–148)*

The constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod states "The synod consists of those congregations and individuals who subscribe to this constitution and have been accepted into membership" (see Bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Chapter II).

### Article I: Acceptance into Membership

*(amended 2017 Synod Report, page 149)*

All membership applications of pastors, congregations, and clergymen not serving congregations are expected to go before the synod in convention for final action. In the intervals between conventions, the synod president, in consultation with the vice president and/or the Doctrine Committee, may under special circumstances receive provisionally into membership congregations, pastors, and clergymen not serving congregations (through colloquy or through transfer) in anticipation of ratification by the synod. The Committee on Synodical Membership appointed and approved by each convention shall receive the required information/documents pertaining to membership applicants. On the morning of the second working day of convention week, the Synodical Membership Committee is expected to prepare appropriate resolutions for action by the convention.

### Article II: Removal from Membership

*(amended 2017 Synod Report, page 149)*

A. Congregations or clergymen are removed from synodical membership when they resign from synodical membership or are expelled by action of the synod.

B. Whenever a resignation or suspension occurs, this action will be reported in the president's annual report to the convention. Where a suspension is issued by the president, the convention committee on the President's Message and Report, which is the committee appointed by the synod vice president and secretary and approved by the convention, shall review the report.

C. In the event that a suspended congregation and/or clergyman chooses to appeal, the matter of the suspension shall not be reviewed by the synod in convention but only by the specially selected Commission on Appeals (see Guidelines for Synodical Discipline and Appeals).

# Section 221
# Guidelines for the Colloquy Committee

*(amended 2006 Synod Report, page 168)*

### Article I: Policy

The Evangelical Lutheran Synod conducts a colloquy because it is imperative that all clergymen who are members of the synod must accept the doctrines of Holy Scripture, and the confessions of the Lutheran Church set forth in the Book of Concord of 1580. The synod expresses its doctrinal positions on various issues through doctrinal resolutions and statements, as well as in its constitution, and requires those who join the synod to be in agreement with that doctrinal position. (See Articles of Incorporation of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Article IV and Article V; Constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Chapter I, Chapter II, and Chapter III; Bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Chapter I, Chapter II, Chapter III and Chapter VII; Guidelines for the Synod's Relationship to its Executive Officers, Article I; Guidelines for Circuit Visitors and Visitations, Article I and Article II.)

### Article II: Membership

*(amended 2005 Synod Report, page 131)*

A. The Colloquy Committee shall consist of the following members:
   1. The president of the synod.
   2. The vice president of the synod.
   3. The chairman of the Doctrine Committee or another clergy member of the Doctrine Committee in case the chairman is the president of Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary.
   4. One layman from the Doctrine Committee appointed by the president for each colloquy.
   5,6. One layman at large and one parish pastor at large to be appointed by the president for each colloquy.
   7. The president of the Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary.

B. If fewer than five members are able to attend a colloquy, the president may appoint an additional member of the Doctrine Committee or a layman at large for that colloquy.

C. The president of the synod ordinarily shall serve as chairman. The committee shall elect its own secretary.

D. Such material as shall be pertinent to the history of the synod shall be deposited with the synod's archivist.

### Article III: Application

A. All applications for colloquy by a pastor shall be directed to the president of the synod who shall make initial inquiries and determine whether the applicant appears suitable for colloquy. In making his recommendation, the president shall also assess the synodical and parish circumstances.

B. The president will arrange for a preliminary interview with the applicant at which time a meeting date for Colloquy—Part 1 will be scheduled. Before the Colloquy—Part 1 session, the applicant will have letters of recommendation sent to the synod president and shall provide a resume (vita), transcripts of college, seminary and post-graduate education and his decision to sever previous fellowship relations, and a statement of reasons for his desire to affiliate with the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

C. The president has the authority and responsibility to seek information regarding the applicant's character and professional ability through references from officials of the church body of the applicant's previous affiliation and through other professional and community references, and require other background information as may be helpful to determine eligibility for membership. Because of the charge given to the leaders of the church in 1 Timothy and Titus 1, the president may inquire into personal and family matters if he believes that there is a concern in that area.

### Article IV: The Meeting with the Colloquy Committee

A. Colloquy—Part 1: This first meeting with the committee is intended to determine whether the applicant is in agreement with the teachings and practices of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod. The committee, in advance of the meeting, shall be apprised of the applicant's biography, education and reasons for wishing to affiliate with the Evangelical Lutheran Synod. The committee shall discuss thoroughly with the applicant his position on all doctrines of the Scripture, his professional attitudes and ethics and also his previous congregational experience. At the close of the meeting, the committee will decide whether the man will be encouraged to continue with the rest of the colloquy.

B. Upon a successful completion of Colloquy—Part 1:
   1. The president will issue a public notice of the name of the applicant.
   2. Prior to initiating the requirements of Article IV. B. 3., 4. and 5, the applicant will give evidence that he has broken fellowship ties with his previous church body.
   3. For a period to be determined by the Colloquy Committee, the applicant may be asked to attend classes at Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary. His attendance in the classroom will be that of an observer auditing the sessions with no personal tuition cost. Payment of expenses and of support for an applicant during seminary training shall be agreed upon between the applicant and the committee and approved by the president of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod at the time of the colloquy.
   4. The applicant will avail himself of the opportunity to become better acquainted with the doctrinal position, traditions, history and culture of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod. He will do this both inside and outside the classroom. He will be encouraged to read selected resources; visit with the synod administrators and the seminary faculty; and attend worship services at synod churches and at Bethany Lutheran College chapel. He will be encouraged to attend one of the pastors' circuit conferences.
   5. The date for Colloquy—Part 2 will be set. Usually this will occur very soon after the man has completed any requirements agreed upon.

**Article V: The Determination of the Colloquy Committee**

At the conclusion of the Colloquy—Part 2, the committee may determine:

A. That the applicant is in agreement with the Evangelical Lutheran Synod in doctrine and practice, including the pastoral qualifications set forth in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1, and is qualified for a Call, in which case such announcement shall be made by the president and in the synod's official publication. The committee should then also recommend the applicant for permanent membership or permanent advisory membership in the synod at the synod's next convention (see Guidelines for the Clergy Roster), or,

B. That, if the applicant is in need of refresher study, the necessary arrangements shall be made with the president of Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary, or,

C. That the applicant is not in agreement with the Evangelical Lutheran Synod in doctrine and practice.

# Section 222
# Guidelines for Assignment Committees

*(adopted 2021 Synod Report, pages 188–189)*

**Article I: ELS Assignments of Pastoral Candidates and Vicars from Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary**

A. Membership

Members shall consist of three representatives: the president of the synod (Bylaws Chapter VII.Paragraph 1.d.1) who shall be its chairman, president of Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary (Guidelines for Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary, Article III.A.2.k), and the chairman of the Board for Home Outreach (Guidelines for the Board for Home Outreach, Article I.B).

B. Meetings

Generally, the committee will schedule its meeting for issuing assignments on or around May 1 of each year.

C. Duties

1. To receive and review official call documents and/or letters from congregations of our fellowship which are requesting a placement of a candidate or the placement of a vicar.
2. Requests for candidates should be addressed to the office of the synod president.
3. Requests for vicars should be addressed to the office of the seminary president.
4. Each request should be signed by the appropriate officers of the congregation, leaving blank the name of the candidate/seminarian for the committee to provide.
5. The committee shall consider each congregation's request, as well as any request from the Board for Home Outreach, and then determine to which location a particular candidate or vicar should receive a placement.
6. The committee is authorized by the synod to make these assignments on behalf of the congregations who submitted the requests.

**Article II: ELS Teacher Assignment Committee**

A. Membership

Members shall consist of three representatives: the president of the synod (Bylaws Chapter VII.Paragraph 1.d.1) who shall be its chairman, the president of Bethany Lutheran College (Guidelines for Bethany Lutheran College, Article III.A.6), and the ELS Secretary for Schools (Guidelines for the Board for Lutheran Schools, Article V.D.8) or his designee from the Board for Lutheran Schools.

B. Meetings

Generally, the committee schedules its meeting for issuing assignments on or around May 1 of each year.

C. Duties of the committee

1. To receive notice from the ELS Secretary for Schools, in consultation with the Coordinator of Education at Bethany Lutheran College, that a teacher candidate is available for assignment to an ELS Lutheran school.
2. To verify that all requests coming from synod schools for teacher candidates are addressed to the ELS Secretary for Schools by a date to be determined by the Board for Lutheran Schools.
3. To receive notice from the ELS Secretary for Schools, in consultation with the BLC Coordinator of Education, that the proper call document(s) has been submitted and signed by the appropriate officers of the congregation/school.
4. To receive the recommendation(s) from the BLC Coordinator of Education, in consultation with the ELS Secretary for Schools, regarding the placement of teacher candidate(s) for specific ELS Lutheran school call(s).
5. The committee shall consider each congregation's request, along with the recommendations from the BLC Coordinator of Education, and then determine to which location(s) the teacher candidate(s) should receive a call.
6. The committee is authorized by the synod to make these assignments on behalf of the congregations who submitted the requests.

D. Responsibilities of students

1. The teacher candidate shall complete the declaration of intent to serve in the ELS and transmit it to the BLC Coordinator of Education at a date to be determined by the Board for Lutheran Schools after consultation with the education department at BLC when an assignment is to be made.
2. The BLC teacher candidate(s) shall receive their assignments during the call service arranged for the seminary graduates.

# Section 223
# Guidelines for the Candidates of Theology and Pastors Receiving a Divine Call

### Article I: Acknowledgment

*(amended 2012 Synod Report, page 142)*
*(amended 2014 Synod Report, pages 129–130)*
*(amended 2018 Synod Report, pages 157–158)*

Upon receipt of a divine call the recipient shall promptly send a letter of acknowledgment to the calling congregation and copies to the president of the synod, the circuit visitor of his own circuit, the visitor of the circuit to which he is called, and, if it is a mission call, to the respective board.

### Article II: Announcement

*(amended 2014 Synod Report, page 129)*
*(amended 2018 Synod Report, page 158)*

If a pastor is currently serving a parish, he shall announce the receipt of a divine call to his congregation as soon as possible.

### Article III: Consultation

*(amended 2014 Synod Report, page 129)*
*(amended 2018 Synod Report, page 158)*

A. He shall request a meeting of his own congregation to give the members the opportunity to consult with him regarding the call he has received.
B. He should also seek counsel from his visitor, from the president of the synod, from the appropriate board (if it is a mission call) and from other brethren.
C. He should also seek further information from the calling congregation.

### Article IV: Decision

*(amended 2018, Synod Report, page 158)*

A. He should strive to reach a decision without undue delay.
B. If his decision is to return the call, he shall inform his congregation and the calling congregation promptly. Copies of the letter should be sent to those listed in Article I above.
C. If his decision is to accept the call, he should request a peaceful release of his call from the congregation he is presently serving.
D. If his decision is to accept the call, then arrangements for installation in the new call should be made with the calling congregation, its circuit visitor and the president of the synod.

### Article V: Ordination and Installation

*(amended 2018 Synod Report, page 158)*

When a Candidate of Theology receives a divine call, he shall arrange for his ordination and installation through the office of the president of the synod. This ordination will normally be held in a congregation to which he has been called.

# Section 224
# Guidelines for the Clergy Roster

There shall be a clergy roster for pastors who are on active status and another roster for those who are currently inactive but are available for a call into the active ministry. There shall be a third roster for pastors who are retired.

### Article I: Membership

Membership on the Clergy Roster of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod shall be by resolution of the synod, accepting applicants who meet one of the following requirements:

A. Graduation from Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary or a seminary of a church body in fellowship with the Evangelical Lutheran Synod and being called, ordained and installed as a pastor, professor or teacher in the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.
B. Approval and recommendation by the Colloquy Committee of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.
C. Transfer from the clergy roster of a sister church body.

### Article II: Categories of Active Membership

A. Pastors serving member congregations.
B. Pastors serving non-member Lutheran congregations which are, nevertheless, in fellowship with the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.
C. Pastors serving independent congregations whose confessions and teachings are in agreement with those of the synod.
D. Ordained clergymen serving as professors in educational institutions of the synod or a sister synod or as teachers in schools of member congregations.
E. Ordained clergymen serving in administrative offices of the synod.
F. Ordained clergymen serving in home and foreign mission fields or in church related organizations.
G. Clergymen who qualify in Article I above and are emeriti.

### Article III: Inactive Classification

A. An ordained clergyman who does not have a current call but desires to remain on the clergy roster and is eligible to perform the duties of the office of ministry described in Article II., and who is not emeritus may, by action of the president and secretary, be continued on the Clergy Roster for a period not to exceed three years from the beginning of the period of inactivity. Upon the application of the individual and the recommendation of the president and secretary for an extension of such classification, the convention shall determine in each instance, on written ballot, whether the request shall be honored for an additional three year period.
B. To remain a member, the applicant must be a communicant member of a congregation belonging to the Evangelical Lutheran Synod or to a synod which is in fellowship with the Evangelical Lutheran Synod

### Article IV: Removal from the Clergy Roster

*(amended 2014 Synod Report, page 130)*

A. Clergymen may be removed from the "Clergy Roster" in accordance with the "Guidelines for Synodical Discipline and Appeals" (Guidelines for Synodical Discipline and Appeals).
B. The names of those clergy who do not meet the requirements of Article III shall be removed from the Clergy Roster by the president and secretary.

### Article V: Eligibility for a Call

All persons on the Clergy Roster are eligible for a call.

# Section 225
# Guidelines for the Emeritus Award

**Article I: Eligibility and Recommendation**

The emeritus award shall be conferred on a retired pastor by the president of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod upon the recommendation of the Circuit Visitors' Conference.

**Article II: Nomination**

Any congregation may nominate a retired or retiring pastor for the award of the emeritus title by filing such a request with its Circuit Visitor. A notice of the award shall be filed with the synod archivist.

# Section 226
# Guidelines When There is a Pastor or Teacher Vacancy in a Congregation

### Article I: Pastor Vacancy

*(amended 2004 Synod Report, page 148)*
*(amended 2018 Synod Report, pages 158–159)*

A. When a congregation becomes vacant the visitor of the circuit and/or the president of the synod shall promptly be notified (see Guidelines for Circuit Visitors and Visitations, Article III.D.).

B. The congregation should consult with its circuit visitor to arrange for a vacancy pastor and other necessary vacancy services.

C. The congregation should also consult with its circuit visitor in arranging a call meeting at which time he or his representative should be present to counsel with the congregation and to submit a list of candidates that he has received from the president of the synod. Nominations for pastor may be made by the congregation from the president's list or additional nominations may be made from the Clergy Roster of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

1. Prior to any discussion of the specific call itself, the circuit visitor should inform the congregation about the Scriptural basis of the call and its application to the congregation. The congregation should discuss and determine its specific needs. The pastoral duties should be enumerated.
2. The compensation that is to be offered to the called worker should be agreed upon.
3. The list of names suggested by the president and others added by the congregation should be discussed and, ultimately, one man chosen to be called, preferably by unanimous vote.

D. In cases where a congregation or parish is unable to meet the minimum mission salary and benefits scale (see *Synod Reports* as appropriate), the visitor may need to encourage the congregation or parish to seek alternative ways (consolidation, mergers, shared or joint services, etc.) to secure pastoral services at the respective location. (See also Guidelines for the Circuit Visitors and Visitations, Article III.D.4.)

E. If the calling congregation desires to issue a call to a pastor who is a member of a sister synod, it shall do so after consultation with the circuit visitor, who, in turn, shall consult with the president of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod. In such cases the president of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod shall consult with the president of the sister synod or of the district where the pastor currently serves. After such consultation, the president shall make his recommendation to the calling congregation.

### Article II: Teacher Vacancy

*(amended 2004 Synod Report, page 148)*
*(amended 2014 Synod Report, page 130)*
*(amended 2018 Synod Report, page 159)*

When there is a teacher vacancy, the congregation should notify the ELS Secretary for Schools and request a list of candidates. It may add its own candidates from the Directory of Lutheran Elementary School and Preschool Teachers of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod. If a congregation desires to call a teacher from a sister synod, it shall counsel with the ELS Secretary for Schools regarding the proper procedures. The designation of duties and the call meeting concerning a teacher should be conducted in the same manner as for pastors in Article I.C. above.

# Section 230
# Guidelines for the Circuit Visitors and Visitations

### Article I: Membership and Election

*(amended 2023 Synod Report, page 163)*

The synod elects a visitor and an alternate visitor for each circuit. A visitor or alternate visitor must be a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod clergy roster and must be a member of an Evangelical Lutheran Synod congregation within their respective circuit. The term is three years. Any vacancy is filled by the president of the synod until the next regular convention.

### Article II: Visitors' Relationship to the President of the Synod

*(amended 2003 Synod Report, page 140)*
*(amended 2015 Synod Report, page 125)*
*(amended 2026 Synod Report, page 205)*

A. Since it is the president's duty to exercise supervision over the pastoral work within the synod and over the spiritual conditions in the congregations (see Bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Chapter III), the visitors shall serve as assistants to the president in his supervisory work.

B. Since the visitors are responsible to the president of the synod, it is their duty to make a full report of all their activity as visitors to the president each year. The president will, in turn, include a report of the visitor's activities in his report to the synod. No confidential information that might militate against Christian love or could in any way give offense should be included in these reports.

Circuit visitors should make a report to the president soon after each visit. When dealing with matters of unusual importance, it is essential that pastors, congregations, circuit visitors and synod officers prepare written minutes, notes or reports of the events that have taken place. Such events may include specific action, counsel or advice, charges, counter charges and defending statements. This is especially important when it is possible that there will be a repercussion. It is not possible to prepare guidelines that will define specific situations that do, and those that do not, require reports. Therefore, it behooves those involved to be alert to the necessity for keeping adequate records. These reports and notes should be kept in the confidential files of the president.

C. The president of the synod shall arrange a workshop for the visitors each year, if possible, preferably in the fall of the year after new personnel may have been elected by the convention. The program for each meeting shall include a review of the synod's work on the circuit level as well as on the synodical level. The theme shall be: "Are you carrying out the work that the synod has resolved to do?" A review of the synod's guidelines shall be included, especially reflecting any amendments that were adopted at the most recent convention. The secretary of the synod shall serve as the secretary of the visitor's workshop.

### Article III: The Duties of the Visitor

*(amended 2004 Synod Report, page 148)*
*(amended 2011 Synod Report, page 126)*
*(amended 2018 Synod Report, page 159)*

As assistants to the president, the visitors, under the president's supervision, shall:

A. Encourage the congregations and pastors in their work.

B. Disseminate information to the pastors and to the congregations concerning the joint work of the synod. This may be done at circuit meetings, congregational visitations, pastoral conferences or in other ways circumstances may suggest.

C. Provide counsel to congregations and pastors in difficult cases.

D. Provide counsel to pastors in his circuit who have received a call.

E. Provide assistance to congregations in calling pastors.

1. At the beginning of the call meeting, prior to any discussion of the specific call itself, the visitor should inform the congregation about the Scriptural basis of the call and its application to the congregation.
2. The specific duties that the congregation wants the pastor or teacher to perform should be discussed and determined.

3. The compensation that is to be offered to the called worker should be agreed upon. The Board for Home Outreach scale should be considered as a guide.
4. In cases where a congregation or parish is unable to meet the minimum mission salary and benefits scale (see Synod Reports as appropriate), the visitor may need to encourage the congregation or parish to seek alternative ways (consolidation, mergers, shared or joint services, etc.) to secure pastoral services at the respective location.
5. The list of names suggested by the president and others added by the congregation should be discussed and, ultimately, one man chosen to be called.

F. Conduct regular visitations in the congregations.

G. Following an installation or ordination service, the circuit visitor shall be responsible for depositing with the archivist of the synod a copy of the program for the day and the vita of the installed pastor or teacher.

H. When called upon, a circuit visitor shall fulfill his duties as required in Chapter VII, Paragraph 5 of the Bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

**Article IV: Visitations**

*(amended 2015 Synod Report, page 125)*

A. Visitations are a useful and wholesome self-evaluation for a congregation. The blessed goals of a visitation are:
1. To promote harmony and unity within a congregation.
2. To increase yet more the congregation's understanding of and commitment to the task of rescuing blood-bought souls.
3. To increase the congregation's appreciation for its sister congregations and for the work they do together as a synod.

B. Congregations should aim at having a visitation at least once every three years. The visitor should encourage the congregations to seek regular visitations by making them aware of the benefits of a visitation and by identifying the procedures to arrange a visitation.

C. Congregations should take the initiative in arranging for a visitation. In cases where there is no invitation the visitor may take the initiative and ascertain from the congregation whether a visitation is agreeable. If so, a date for a visitation may be set and plans made. The president of the synod will conduct or arrange for a visitation in the visitor's congregation.

D. For maximum benefit from a visitation, a congregation should evaluate its work prior to the visitor's arrival. In particular the congregation may benefit from the consideration of:
1. Its goals and objectives, particularly as set forth in its constitution, bylaws and other statements.
2. Its strengths and weaknesses.
3. Its needs.

E. In the conducting of a visitation the following suggestions are offered:
1. That the visitor attend, if possible, one of the regular church services or ask the pastor to submit to him a few sermon manuscripts. The visitor may arrange for a meeting with the elders of the congregation for private consultation if this is desired. Such meetings shall be publicly announced in advance.
2. That the visitor report to the congregation on the doctrinal, missionary, and educational work of the synod. He should be prepared to answer questions about any phase of the synodical work and finances. If he is not able to provide the requested information at the moment, he should later supply the information.
3. That the visitation give attention to the matters
    a. Of preaching and teaching: whether the pastor rightly divides the Word of Truth (Law and Gospel); whether he teaches the Gospel of salvation in its truth and purity and duly warns against existing false doctrines; whether he properly correlates doctrine with life and whether he uses simple, clear and unmistakable language.
    b. Of formal Christian education: whether all possible avenues of instruction are used, such as Christian Day Schools, Sunday Schools, Vacation Bible Schools, Bible classes, and confirmation classes; whether the catechumens, children and adults, are thoroughly instructed in Luther's Small Catechism; whether they understand the meaning and are able to cite proof-texts from the Bible to show the catechism's agreement with the Scripture.
    c. Of services: whether proper liturgical forms and ceremonies are being used; whether services are regularly held at an advantageous time.

d. Of records: whether the church books and official lists of the congregation are well kept.

e. Of encroaching sects: whether troublesome sects (cults) or secret societies or other anti-Christian philosophies or trends are found in the area, and what is being done to guard the members against the evil influence of such.

f. In general: attention should be given also to such matters as attendance at church, attendance at communion, and attendance at voters' meetings, pastoral visiting, evangelical church discipline, Christian giving, personal mission work, participation of the congregation in the work of the church at large, adequate salaries for pastors and teachers, Bible reading, family devotions, bringing up children in the home in a Christian manner, the kind of reading material and religious books found in the homes, reading the church papers, announcement for communion, care of the youth after confirmation.

F. The visitor will be careful that he does not conduct himself in an officious manner, but will at all times diligently seek to be truly evangelical and show that he is present to give encouragement and help.

G. As far as the pastor himself is concerned, the visitor shall, in a manner becoming a brother, speak with him as to his own spiritual life and his studies. To that end the visitor should try to spend some time with the pastor in his study. At such time he may also examine sermon manuscripts, discuss the method of sermon preparation and the selection of sermon texts, examine and discuss the keeping of church record books, examine and discuss the instruction materials used in Sunday School and confirmation classes and examine the pastor's library. He should also spend time with the pastor and his family in their home.

H. Expenses for the visitor, such as for travel, meals, lodging and substitute speaker shall be paid by the visited congregation but, if necessary, shall be paid from the Synod Fund as determined by the Board of Trustees.

# Section 240
# Convention Guidelines

### Article I: Convention Committees and Reports

*(amended 2008 Synod Report, pages 146–147)*
*(amended 2014 Synod Report, page 130)*

A. The voting members of convention committees shall consist of clergymen, male teachers and male professors who are permanent members of the synod (Bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Chapter II, Paragraph 2), and of delegates who have been assigned to committees by the convention. Advisory members may also serve on convention committees (see Bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Chapter IV, Paragraph 4). Others may (1) attend the committee meetings if such attendance is approved by the committee, and, (2) with approval, enter into the discussion. Only those who have been elected to the convention committees by the convention shall have the right to vote during the committee deliberations. Committee members shall serve until the committee is dismissed unless a special convention is called. Normally, the delegates and committees of the previous regular convention shall serve at such special conventions (see Bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Chapter IV, Paragraph 3).

B. Prior to the convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, the president, in consultation with its secretary, shall appoint the convention's credentials committee, chaplain, tellers, head usher, organist, public press and parliamentarian who shall serve throughout the convention. Nominations for all other convention committees shall be presented by the president, in consultation with the secretary; further nominations may be made from the floor.

C. Prior to the convention, the vice president of the synod, in consultation with its secretary, shall present nominations for the committee of the president's message and report. Further nominations may be made from the floor.

D. Prior to the convention, it is the responsibility of the nominated committee members to review the report of the standing board(s) or committee(s) as contained in the *Book of Reports and Memorials*. The work that the board or committee reports should be consistent with its guidelines.

E. Following ratification by the convention, the committee members shall adjourn to the committee's assigned workplace under the direction of the temporary chairman, and shall elect a permanent chairman and a recording secretary.

1. The committee shall:
    a. Read Article I.E of the Convention Guidelines so that it might fully understand its duties and responsibilities.
    b. Review the guidelines as they are printed in the *Handbook of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod* under which the standing board or committee is operating. (For example: The convention committee on Higher Education shall review all of the guidelines for Bethany Lutheran College and Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary).
    c. Review the report(s) contained in the *Book of Reports and Memorials* and the *Convention Handbook* that are pertinent to its assignment. The committee may wish to schedule and interview invited resource people (for example, officers of the synod, of a permanent board or of an institution) to assist the committee in its assignment.
2. The primary work of the convention committee is to review and assess the work of the standing board or committee.
    a. The committee shall determine the resource people it wishes to invite (standing board members, officers, memorial sponsors, etc.).
    b. The committee should consider whether there are any discrepancies in the report insofar as the duties of the standing board are concerned and, if necessary, so report.
    c. The committee may consider other suggestions for the standing board and make recommendations for studies or research by the Synod Review Committee or another committee. It may recommend development of guideline changes that would be reviewed at a future convention.

3. Any recommendation concerning changes in the budget of a committee to be enacted at the current convention must be submitted to the convention Committee on Finance (see Guidelines for the Planning and Coordinating Committee, Article IV.A.2.a.).
4. The guidelines in Article I.E. are to be printed annually in the convention materials.

F. All convention committee reports should, if possible, be duplicated and distributed prior to the close of the session previous to the session in which the report is to be acted upon.

**Article II: Scheduling of Convention Business**

*(amended 2014 Synod Report, page 128)*

Inasmuch as the specific business varies from convention to convention, the president and the secretary are authorized to use their judgment in preparation of the appropriate agenda for each convention. Specific elements that will be included in each agenda are:

1. Devotion
2. A communion service.
3. Essay (doctrine or other aspects of synod responsibility).
4. President's message and report.
5. Elections
6. Reports of boards and committees and subsequent recommendations or action as the convention determines.

**Article III: Secretary Assistant**

The officers of the synod shall appoint an assistant for the secretary for each convention.

**Article IV: Reports and Memorials to the Convention**

*(amended 2004 Synod Report, page 148)*
*(amended 2006 Synod Report, page 168)*

A. Memorials are recommendations in the form of proposed resolutions requesting action on the part of a convention, which originate from a source other than standing boards and committees of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod. Questions concerned with the work or jurisdiction of a specific board or committee should be sent to it.

B. All permanent boards and committees are required to submit annual reports to the synod for inclusion in the convention *Book of Reports and Memorials*. The recommendation for any resolutions, actions or studies that the board or committee wishes the convention to adopt should be included in that report.

C. Memorials adopted by a congregation and certified by the pastor and the congregation secretary will be accepted and published in the *Book of Reports and Memorials*. In special circumstances where it is not possible to submit a memorial through a congregation, a memorial will be accepted from an individual clergyman who is a permanent member (listed on the clergy roster) if it is concerned with a doctrinal matter and is so certified by the synod president. The special circumstances should be identified.

D. Because it is in the best interests of a properly ordered convention that all available information be thoroughly studied by the pastors and delegates in advance of the convention, it is necessary for publication in the *Book of Reports and Memorials* that all reports and memorials be in the hands of the president and secretary of the convention at least three months before the opening date of the convention. Any memorial received after the publication of the *Book of Reports and Memorials* or the *Convention Handbook* shall be presented in written form to the president of the synod who will bring it before the convention to determine whether to place it on the agenda.

**Article V: Synod Budget Adoption by the Convention**

*(adopted 2016 Synod Report, page 149)*
*See Guidelines for the Planning and Coordinating Committee, Article IV*

**Article VI: Advisory Members of the Synod Convention**

Lay members of the permanent boards and committees of the synod who are in attendance at the regular conventions of the synod may be seated as advisory members by the convention (having the right to speak on the floor of the convention). Such lay members shall advise the Credentials Committee of their presence.

**Article VII: Election Procedures**

*See General Synodical Guidelines, Article V*

**Article VIII: Election of Officers**

A. In the years in which officers are elected, the session after morning recess of the second working day of the convention, following the first report of the convention committee on Synodical Membership, is to be set aside for the election of the synod's officers.

B. For each of the three officers of the synod a nominating ballot shall be followed by as many election ballots as necessary for election. (see Bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Chapter VI, Paragraph 1 and Paragraph 3)

C. Once balloting for an office has begun, the convention shall remain in session without interruption until the office has been filled.

**Article IX: Committee on Nominations**

*(amended 2003 Synod Report, page 139)*
*(amended 2005 Synod Report, page 130)*
*(amended 2006 Synod Report, page 127)*
*(amended 2015 Synod Report, page 123)*
*(amended 2018 Synod Report, pages 159–160)*
*(amended 2023 Synod Report, page 163)*

A. Election of the Committee on Nominations

1. The convention shall nominate and elect a committee on nominations of eight members, four laymen and four clergymen, who shall serve for the next year's convention.
2. No member of a board or committee whose term expires at the next annual convention shall be a member of the committee.
3. No member of the Committee on Nominations shall succeed himself.
4. Members ineligible to serve on the Committee on Nominations shall be listed in the *Convention Handbook*.
5. No officer or employee of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod shall serve on the Committee on Nominations.
6. The secretary of the synod shall make arrangements for the first meeting of the committee.

B. Duties of the Committee on Nominations

1. At least two candidates shall be nominated for each board or committee position that will become vacant at the next convention of the synod. Nominees who have lost an election to a particular board or committee shall not automatically be nominated by the Committee on Nominations to a subsequent position on the same board or committee, but they may be nominated from the floor of the convention for another position on the same board or committee.
    a. The committee is not obligated to nominate an incumbent to continue his present position on a board or committee. However, the committee should consider whether that person has been suggested for nomination for re-election, the experience and continuity of service that he brings to the office and his ability to continue effective service.
    b. Names of potential candidates may be solicited from congregations of the synod, from circuit visitors, from chairmen of standing boards and committees, from synodical officers and from other sources. The committee may seek input form the standing boards and committees about the skills and expertise needed for their work.
    c. Nominees must be permanent synod members or active members of an ELS congregation.
    d. Ordinarily, no person should serve on more than one synod board or committee.
2. The slate, including the qualifications of each candidate, and their biographical sketches, shall be submitted to the secretary of the synod for publication in the *Book of Reports and Memorials*. The biographical sketch should include education and service that may be relevant to the office for which the candidate has been nominated, his home congregation, the number of years as a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, the age of the nominee, and the number of current consecutive terms that a nominated incumbent has held that office.
3. Board members for the Board for Lutheran Schools: The voting members will consist of nine men: three will be clergy, two will be male teachers in ELS Schools, three will be laymen and one may

represent any of these categories. Those serving as teacher representatives must have successfully completed the Evangelical Lutheran Synod Teacher Certification requirements. The committee will give strong consideration to qualifications and to regional representation from throughout the synod. (See Guidelines for the Board for Lutheran Schools, Article III.B.)

C. Expenses for this committee shall be budgeted in the Synod Fund.

# Section 242
# Guidelines for the General Pastoral Conference

*(adopted 2006 Synod Report, page 168)*

**Article I: Purpose**

The clergy of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod shoulder an important responsibility. In order to assist them with this responsibility, it is good for all the clergy to gather annually to build each other up (1 Thessalonians 5:11), to learn from each other, and to be informed of events in the synod and in the church at large.

**Article II: Membership and Organization**

A. The general pastoral conference shall consist of all clergy listed on the clergy roster of the synod (see Guidelines for the Clergy Roster).

B. The conference shall organize itself as it deems appropriate, including the election of a chairman and secretary.
   1. The chairman shall have such duties as are usual to that office and as the conference and these guidelines may require.
   2. The duties of the secretary are defined in the General Synodical Guidelines, Article III.C., and in these guidelines.

   C. The conference shall normally meet annually, at a site and date set by the conference.

**Article III: Duties**

*(amended 2012 Synod Report, page 142)*

A. The conference shall hear papers and presentations pertaining to various aspects of theology, especially those which would prove helpful to those serving in the pastoral office.

B. It shall consider matters, especially doctrinal, that are under discussion by the synod in convention.

C. The conference shall hear presentations concerning various aspects of the work of the synod, especially from the synod president, the presidents of Bethany Lutheran College and Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary, and other full-time synodical officials as needed.

D. The conference shall, when appropriate, make recommendations to the synod concerning actions or decisions the conference deems appropriate.

# Section 245
# Guidelines for Equalization of Expenses for the Annual Convention and General Pastoral Conferences of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod

### Article I: Guidelines for the Equalization Committee

The Equalization Committee is to solicit and administer the Pastors' and Laymen's Equalization Funds. These funds are to help defray the expenses of lay delegates, pastors and qualifying persons who attend the synod convention and the general pastoral conference.

A. Membership
   1. The committee shall consist of three (3) members: one clergyman (who shall be the equalizer for the clergy) and two (2) laymen (who shall be the equalizers for the lay delegates).
   2. The members shall be elected by the synod for three-year terms, one each year. Elections are held according to the rules established for elected offices of the synod.

B. Duties
   1. Request funds and disburse them to qualifying persons who attend the Evangelical Lutheran Synod convention and the General Pastoral Conference. (See Article II)
   2. Solicit funds from congregations and disburse them to the synod lay delegates for their travel expense. (See Article III)

### Article II: Rules for Equalization for Pastors and Male Teachers

A. Eligibility
   1. The following shall be included in equalization for both the convention and the conference:
      a. Pastors serving member congregations.
      b. Pastors serving non-member congregations.
      c. Pastors serving home mission stations.
      d. Theologically trained professors in educational institutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.
   2. If they request, the following may be included in equalization for both the convention and the conference:
      a. Vicars
      b. Pastors Emeriti
      c Professors Emeriti
      d. Inactive clergy included on the Evangelical Lutheran Synod clergy roster.
      e. Ordained clergymen who are members of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod and are in an educational or institutional ministry of our fellowship.
      f. Exception: Male teachers serving schools of member congregations shall be included for the convention only.

B. Payment
   1. Each congregation is expected to pay the equalization for its pastor(s) and male teacher(s). All clergymen, whether present or not, are to be included in the equalization unless exempted by Article II.A.2, or by a separate valid excuse submitted in writing to, and accepted by, the synod's president.
   2. The synod shall pay:
      a. The equalization for foreign missionaries when on furlough, serving under the call of the Board for World Outreach, in attendance at either the convention or conference. Their equalization expenses shall be paid from the Foreign Mission budget of the synod.
      b. Equalization for home missionaries serving preaching stations and exploratory missions shall be paid from the Board for Home Outreach budget.
      c. Registration, equalization, lodging and meals for retired pastors who attend the convention or the conference or both. (see Guidelines for the Board of Trustees, Article III.F.)

(1) Per diem for lodging and meals for retired pastors who attend the convention or the conference or both.
(2) Reimbursement rate shall be established by the Board of Trustees.

3. Institutions shall pay:
   a. The cost of registration and equalization of all theologically trained professors.
   b. Registration, equalization, lodging and meals for retired professors to the convention and the conference.
4. Subscription fees for the *Lutheran Synod Quarterly* shall be included in the pastoral conference equalization.
5. Clergymen and male teachers serving as delegates to the convention shall be included under laymen's equalization.
6. Because all clergymen of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod are to be in attendance at conventions and conferences, the equalizer shall write to all active pastors not in attendance requesting equalization payment from them.

**Article III: Laymen's Equalization Rules and Procedures**

A. Duties of the Lay Equalizers:
   1. One layman shall serve as chairman, and the second layman as vice chairman.
   2. The chairman is responsible for handling receipts and disbursements of the fund.
   3. The vice chairman will act as advisor and administer the funds only in the absence of the chairman.
   4. The chairman and vice chairman have the authority and responsibility to make expenditures from the fund for necessary operating expenses.
   5. An annual report of the fund listing receipts and disbursements shall be submitted to the synod convention; this report is to be prepared by the chairman and reviewed by the vice chairman.
   6. If needed, meetings are scheduled at the discretion of the chairman.

B. Remittance of Payment: All synod congregations are requested to send their remittances according to the assessment determined by the chairman of this committee by May 15th, or sooner, if possible.

C. Disbursements
   1. Only those delegates whose congregations remit to this fund will receive equalization from it.
   2. Delegates must register at the convention showing name, congregation, round-trip mileage, and/or travel expenses in order to receive reimbursement.
   3. The chairman will be reimbursed according to the rules for delegates' equalization.

**Article IV: Formula For Laymen's Equalization Assessment**

A. In order to share, between congregations of various sized communicant memberships, the costs of transportation for laymen to attend the conventions of the synod, a formula is established which allocates the congregations to nine categories.
   1. The estimated amount needed to finance the transportation costs is divided by the number of congregations.
   2. This average amount is to be paid by those congregations in the middle (fifth) category.
   3. The average amount is then divided by the remaining categories (eight).
   4. This factor is then used to step down the average cost for the congregations in the four categories smaller than the middle category, and to step up the costs in the four categories that are larger than the middle category.

B. The following example is provided:
   1. If the amount needed is $23,000, then divide this amount by the number of congregations in the synod (136 in the 1998 Synod Report).
   2. The amount is $170; this amount is to be paid by those congregations in the middle category.
   3. Then divide the $170 by eight (the number of remaining categories); this figure is $21.
   4. To calculate the four category amounts less than $170, subtract $21 from $170 four times.
   5. Then add $21 four times to $170 to find the four category amounts above this middle figure.
   6. Each category amount is then multiplied by 15 or 16. These numbers are derived from the 136 congregations divided by the nine categories. The result is 15.1111. Eight categories have 15 congregations in each and one has 16.

7. The congregations selected for each category are found by listing the congregations according to communicant membership, from the smallest to the largest. Congregations 1 to 15 (the smallest ones) will be in the first category and will each pay $86 equalization. The next 15 will pay $107 and so on.
8. The following schedule will result:
   $86 x 15 = $1,290
   $107 x 15 = $1,605
   $128 x 15 = $1,920
   $149 x 15 = $2,235
   $170 x 16 = $2,720
   $191 x 15 = $2,865
   $212 x 15 = $3,180
   $233 x 15 = $3,495
   $254 x 15 =$3,810
   Total amount $23,120
   In general the smaller congregations will pay as little as $86 and the largest will pay $254.

# Section 250
# Guidelines for Adopting Doctrinal Statements

*(adopted 2008 Synod Report, pages 143–145)*

The 2006 convention adopted the Synod Review Committee's proposed changes to the "Guidelines for the Colloquy Committee" (Guidelines for the Colloquy Committee). The first article reads:

> The Evangelical Lutheran Synod conducts a colloquy because it is imperative that all clergymen who are members of the synod must accept the doctrines of Holy Scripture, and the confessions of the Lutheran Church set forth in the Book of Concord of 1580. The synod expresses its doctrinal positions on various issues through doctrinal resolutions and statements, as well as in its constitution, and requires those who join the synod to be in agreement with that doctrinal position.

When the synod takes the serious action of adopting a doctrinal statement, it does so with the full understanding that formulating statements on doctrine and assenting to them (which we do by vote) is in keeping with Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions (1 Peter 3:15; 2 Corinthians 4:13; John 8:31, 32; Formula of Concord – Solid Declaration, Rule and Norm; Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article IV, 193). Adherence to Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions always remains of paramount concern for the synod. Issues, however, arise from time to time on matters not fully addressed in the Book of Concord. In order to resolve a disagreement on issues, the synod may decide to develop and eventually adopt doctrinal statements.

While the Evangelical Lutheran Synod does not establish doctrine on the basis of a vote, it is often necessary to establish agreement by vote on what the Word of God teaches, and to accept or reject statements of such agreement by a vote. It is recognized that absolute unanimity (100% of the vote that is cast) on the wording of a document is unlikely. These guidelines have been developed to help the synod achieve a greater consensus before the document is voted on by the synod.

### Article I: Determining the Need for a Statement

*(amended 2019 Synod Report, page 131)*
*(amended 2021 Synod Report, page 188)*

The synod in convention shall determine that work should begin on a doctrinal statement on the basis of one of the following:

A. Properly submitted memorials may include a recommendation that the synod begin work on a doctrinal statement (see Convention Guidelines, Article IV.C); or

B. The Doctrine Committee, in consultation with the synod president and vice president, may include in its report to the convention a recommendation for work to begin on a statement; or

C. The synod president in consultation with the vice president may bring items to the attention of the convention with the recommendation that the synod begin work on a statement; or

D. When the officers of the synod and the Doctrine Committee determine that a doctrinal issue needs immediate public clarification and that it is not an issue of controversy within the synod, but has not been clearly stated earlier in synod publications, a statement may be presented to the synod for adoption.

E. The definitions of the terms:

1. **Position Statement**—A statement on a topic over which there is no internal controversy, adopted by the synod, that summarizes biblical teachings to provide a clear confession to the outside world (see Guidelines for Adopting Doctrinal Statements, Article I.D). Such statements may be used in colloquies and for other official actions.
2. **Doctrinal Statement**—A statement adopted by the synod in response to a controversy in the synod which summarizes for the congregations of the synod biblical teaching that provides a clear confession of what Scripture teaches (see Guidelines for Adopting Doctrinal Statements). Such statements shall be used in colloquies and for other official actions.

### Article II: Role of the General Pastoral Conference

At the request of the convention, the Program Committee of the General Pastoral Conference shall arrange for various papers to be presented that would address the doctrinal issue at hand. Ample discussion time, as defined by the conference itself, should be included on the agenda. In connection with the issue the conference should then report directly

to the convention a summary of the papers and the discussions. More than one General Pastoral Conference would likely be necessary to provide enough opportunity for differing viewpoints to be addressed.

**Article III: Lay Involvement**

Following the preparation of the report by the General Pastoral Conference, special forums should be held throughout the synod's circuits where practicable, and arranged through the office of the synod president and circuit visitors. Here the laity should be informed by providing them with materials representing differing views on the issue. Input from these conferences should be recorded and forwarded to the synod's elected Doctrine Committee. In addition, the pastors are urged to present the material on the proposed statement in a Bible class or other format for their congregation(s).

**Article IV: Preparation of a Statement**

A. When the convention determines that a statement should be prepared, the president shall normally assign the task to the Doctrine Committee. The convention may determine that the preparation of a statement should be made by another committee. The statement should be prepared with the input from the General Pastoral Conference, from the lay circuit meetings and from the congregational discussions. The committee should have access to all of the information that has been discussed in the several venues. (Guidelines for the Doctrine Committee, Article II.A to B)

B. When the committee has completed its statement, the statement should be submitted to the circuit conferences and to the General Pastoral Conference.

C. On the basis of the input from the conferences, the committee should prepare the statement or set of theses for the convention. In its report the committee should also include a summary of the controversy, an explanation of the need for a statement, and the rationale used for compiling the statement.

**Article V: Convention Involvement and Action**

A. The convention will determine whether there appears to be enough consensus in the synod to adopt the statement proposed. The normal course would be that, following the Doctrine Committee's report to the convention, at least one more year would be devoted to further study before the proposed statement is presented for final adoption. Within that year, any necessary editing of the statement may occur (e.g., as suggested by the General Pastoral Conference) and then be reflected in the Doctrine Committee's next report to the synod.

B. The proposed statement will be read at two consecutive conventions. After the reading at the second convention, a vote shall be taken, unless the convention determines otherwise.

1. The first reading will be followed by discussion. The statement may be amended by a simple majority vote at that time. At the end of the floor discussion, the matter is automatically continued, as amended, until the next convention.
2. The reading at the second consecutive convention will be followed by further discussion. The statement may be amended at this time by a simple majority, provided the proposed amendment has been submitted to the president as a memorial and included in the *Book of Reports and Memorials* or the *Convention Handbook*. If a proposed amendment revises the intended meaning of the proposed statement, it may be ruled by the president to be a substitute motion. If the convention adopts the substitute motion, the convention may determine that the reading at this time is the first reading of a revised statement, and no vote will be taken, but the motion will be continued to the next convention.
3. To adopt the statement, the votes in favor of the adoption must be at least two-thirds of those cast on the question unless a different percentage has already been established at the time of the first reading. If the statement is now adopted, it becomes effective immediately, unless a different time has been stated in the resolution. If the approving votes are not sufficient to adopt the statement, the convention may refer it to the Doctrine Committee or the General Pastoral Conference or both.

C. Only the synod in convention has the authority to decide the appropriate time for the final adoption of a doctrinal statement. It alone also retains the right to set aside the normal procedures here outlined.

# Section 252
# Guidelines for Overseas Fellowship

*(adopted 2022 Synod Report, pages 153–154)*

### Article I: Establishing a Due Diligence Panel

A. Organization
   1. With the rise of social media and in this age of technology and communication, many various church groups are contacting ELS member churches resulting in an increase in requests for fellowship and/or partnership in the work of the gospel.
   2. When future requests for partnership, fellowship, or an assistance relationship pass the Preliminary Stage (see Article II.A. below), the synod president shall form a due diligence panel.

B. Members of the due diligence panel:
   The due diligence panel shall consist of at least the following individuals:
   1. The synod president (Bylaws Chapter VII.Paragraph 1.h).
   2. A representative from the Doctrine Committee (Guidelines for the Doctrine Committee Article II.B and E).
   3. The Administrator of the Board for World Outreach (Guidelines for the Board for World Outreach Article IV.B.5 and C.1, 3, 4, 5).
   4. The president of Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary.
   5. The panel shall elect a chairman and secretary from its members. The duties of the secretary are defined in the General Synodical Guidelines, Article III.C.

### Article II: The Duties of the Panel

The aforementioned panel shall follow the four-stage process in an evangelical spirit:

A. **Preliminary Stage**—This stage involves fielding the request and initial vetting by the administrator of the Board for World Outreach and/or the president of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS). This is a filtering process with the hope and prayer that we will have new like-minded partners in gospel ministry. In the interest of coordinating efforts, any decision to proceed will be thoroughly documented and will be communicated to the president of the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference (CELC).

B. **Stage One**—Simple Confession of Faith: In this stage the panel begins its work using three questionnaires to facilitate discussions with the top leaders of the church body. The questionnaires are focused on basic information, basic law and gospel questions, and doctrinal questions based on Luther's Small Catechism. Progress is well documented and shared with the chairman of the regional Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference.

C. **Stage Two**—Lutheran Confessions: In this stage, a review is done by the panel using a series of questions about the Bible's teachings. Additionally, reviews of doctrinal statements and their constitution are completed. Meetings in this stage should take place with as many pastors and lay leaders as possible. Progress is documented and shared as above.

D. **Stage Three**—Doctrine and Practice: This stage includes a questionnaire as well as a review of worship services, sermons, liturgy, teaching materials, publications, etc. Meetings in this stage should take place with leaders, pastors and church members. Progress is documented and shared as above.

E. **Stage Four**—Formal Declaration: In this stage an updated doctrinal statement and constitution are received as well as an official request of the church body. Upon successful review, communicate to the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference the desire of both sides to declare fellowship and take steps to join and participate in the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference, and pass a formal declaration of fellowship at an Evangelical Lutheran Synod convention.

### Article III: Facilitating the Work of the Panel

A. At any point in this process or at several points in this process, as a component of any of these stages or between any of these stages, the panel may, as needed, carry out or facilitate workshops, seminars, conferences, or special classes, online or in person, with the pastors or leaders of a church body that has approached the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, to help them strengthen and clarify their understanding of and commitment to Confessional Lutheran doctrine and practice.

B. While such discussions are underway to determine whether there is doctrinal agreement, no other programs or assistance (other than the aforementioned workshops, seminars, conferences, or special classes, and humanitarian aid when and where appropriate) will ordinarily be provided.

C. After, and only after, the synod declares fellowship with a church body, the synod shall determine whether assistance and support shall be extended to the church body taking into consideration the role the synod has already assigned to the Board for World Outreach in like circumstances.

D. When the synod convention resolves to establish fellowship with another church body, the panel's work is officially ended.

E. When fellowship is established, the documents of the panel's proceedings shall be filed with the synod president and with the chairman of the Board for World Outreach. Where a request for fellowship is denied, the documents of the panel's proceedings shall be stored at the ELS archives, with a fifty-year restriction on access, except when the synod president authorizes such access.

# Section 260
# Guidelines for Synodical Discipline and Appeals

*(amended 2008 Synod Report, pages 148–150)*

Involuntary termination of membership in the synod is a serious matter which must be preceded by substantial deliberation. Rejection of the doctrinal standard of the synod and disavowal of the constitution and its bylaws that have been approved by the synod membership in convention are serious concerns. Prayerful advice, encouragement and admonition must be employed to open the hearts of all concerned. If the differences with the synod cannot be resolved, then termination of membership must be considered. But always the salvation of souls must be of central concern. If a member of the synod publicly disavows the doctrinal standard and the corresponding practice of the synod, he has, in effect, removed himself from membership in the synod, but the matter must be dealt with according to an orderly process.

In these guidelines, the synod, acting through its officers, may suspend a member (congregation or pastor) if, after due admonition, the member persists in teaching or acting contrary to the synod's confessional standard or persists without repentance in an immoral action or behavior. In certain cases, a substantiated public immoral action may require immediate dismissal from permanent membership, even when repentance properly and thankfully enables the individual to retain communicant membership in a congregation. The public ministry is not to be blamed (1 Timothy 3:1ff.).

Until such time as a member is suspended, the member is considered to be a member in good standing. When a suspension has been announced, the member may either accept the suspension or appeal it. If the member does not appeal the suspension, then the member has been expelled from the synod and forfeits all rights and privileges of membership. Upon the expulsion being reported by the president to the synod in convention, the member is removed formally from membership in the synod.

If the member appeals the suspension, the matter enters the appeals process (which see), and while the appeal is being considered, the privileges of membership and church fellowship are held in abeyance. In the case of a pastor serving a congregation, the president in consultation with the vice president and the congregation(s) affected, shall determine whether or not it is proper for the pastor to continue serving his congregation while the appeal is in process. If the appeal fails, the suspension becomes expulsion, and when the findings of the commission on the appeal have been reported to the synod, the member is removed from membership.

### Article I: General Cases

*(amended 2014 Synod Report, page 129)*

When a pastor or teacher of the synod is charged with adhering to false doctrine, unscriptural practice, living an ungodly life or neglecting his duty and, after the local congregation, in matters which properly fall within its jurisdiction, has dealt with this matter on the basis of Scripture and according to its constitution and has not been able to reach a God-pleasing resolution of the matter, the following guidelines apply:

A. In cases of discipline involving pastors or teachers who hold membership in the synod, the circuit visitor has original jurisdiction. He shall hear the case and render a decision on the basis of Scripture.

B. If after due admonition the visitor's decision is not accepted he shall report and review the case in consultation with the president of the synod. The president shall arrange for a review with the visitor and the party(ies) concerned

C. If the president finds a visitor's decision to be in keeping with Scripture, he shall urge the acceptance of said decision.

D. If after due admonition the president's counsel is not accepted, he shall appoint a review committee of five members (three clergy and two lay). The chairman of the committee shall be designated by the president. The committee shall investigate the charges and decisions and, on the basis of its findings, make recommendation to the president.

E. If further action is necessary, the president, together with the circuit visitor and the review committee, shall again attempt to bring about a resolution of the problem.

F. In special and urgent cases where no resolution is reached, the president shall exercise the power of suspension from synodical membership. His written communication suspending membership shall include specific reasons for the suspension and shall be sent by certified mail. He shall report the suspension to the convention.

G. The suspended party has the right to appeal the decision. This appeal shall be addressed to the Board of Trustees through its secretary. An appeal must be received by the secretary within sixty days of the date of suspension. (see Article V.)

H. In the case of a congregation the same procedure shall be followed.

**Article II: Board for Home Outreach**

*(see Guidelines for the Board for Home Outreach, Article IX)*
*(amended 2014 Synod Report, page 129)*

A. In cases of discipline involving missionaries, teachers and mission stations under the jurisdiction of the Board for Home Outreach, the board shall exercise original jurisdiction. It shall hear the case and render a decision on the basis of Scripture.

B. If, after due admonition, the board's decision is not accepted, it shall arrange for a review together with the circuit visitor and the party(ies) concerned and shall render a decision on the basis of Scripture.

C. If after due admonition by the board and the circuit visitor the decision is not accepted, they shall report the case to the president of the synod. The president shall arrange for a review with the board, the visitor and the party(ies) concerned.

D. If the president finds the decision of the board and the visitor to be in keeping with Scripture, he shall urge acceptance of said decision.

E. In special and urgent cases where no resolution is reached, the president shall exercise the power of suspension from synodical membership. His written communication suspending membership shall include specific reasons for the suspension and shall be sent by certified mail. He shall report the suspension to the convention.

F. The suspended party has the right to appeal the decision. This appeal shall be addressed to the Board of Trustees through its secretary. In the case of a congregation, the same procedure shall be followed. An appeal must be received by the secretary within sixty days of the date of suspension. (see Article V.)

G. Whenever a mission station becomes self supporting, the procedure under Article I: General Cases shall apply.

**Article III: Board for World Outreach**

*(see Guidelines for the Board for World Outreach, Article VI)*
*(amended 2009 Synod Report, page 124)*
*(amended 2014 Synod Report, page 129)*

A. In cases of discipline involving missionaries, teachers and staff under the direction of the Board for World Outreach, the board shall exercise original jurisdiction. It shall hear the case and render a decision on the basis of Scripture.

B. If after due admonition the decision of the board is not accepted, the board shall have the authority to remove the worker from his position and shall report its action to the president of the synod.

C. The president of the synod shall review the case in consultation with the board and the party(ies) concerned. In special and urgent cases where no resolution is reached, the president shall exercise the power of suspension from synodical membership. His written communication suspending membership shall include specific reasons for the suspension and shall be sent by certified mail. He shall report the suspension to the convention.

D. The suspended party has the right to appeal the decision. This appeal shall be addressed to the Board of Trustees through its secretary. In the case of a congregation, the same procedure shall be followed. An appeal must be received by the secretary within sixty days of the date of suspension. (See Article V.)

**Article IV: Synodical Educational Institutions**

*(amended 2014 Synod Report, page 129)*
*(amended 2018 Synod Report, page 160)*

A. In cases of discipline involving the faculty and staff of one of the synodical schools, the respective institutional president shall exercise original jurisdiction.

B. The institutional president shall report his action, along with recommendations, to the Board of Regents for review and action. The board has the duty to suspend or remove from office any member of the faculty or staff whose case has been properly presented to the board through the office of the president and who, despite due admonition, has been found guilty of false doctrine, living an offensive life contrary to Scripture, or willful neglect of official duties. Whenever the board is convinced that a member of the faculty is not able to fulfill the official duties of the office because of lack of the necessary knowledge and ability to teach, or because of inability to exercise proper discipline, or for other valid reasons, it shall be authorized to remove that member.

C. The board shall report its action to the president of the synod, who shall review the case. In special and urgent cases involving those who hold individual synod membership and wherein there are concerns about false

doctrine or ungodly life, he shall exercise the power of suspension from synodical membership. His written communication suspending membership shall include specific reasons for the suspension and shall be sent by certified mail. He shall report the suspension to the convention.

D. The suspended party has the right to appeal the decision of the synodical president. This appeal shall be addressed to the Board of Trustees through its secretary. An appeal must be received by the secretary within sixty days of the date of suspension. (See Article V.)

E. In the event that the president of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod is persuaded that the board has not taken appropriate disciplinary action, he shall so notify the board. If he is not satisfied that the issue is properly resolved, he shall report the situation to the convention. (see Bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Chapter III and Chapter VII, Paragraph 1.b.)

**Article V: Guidelines for Appeals to the Synod**

*(amended 2003 Synod Report, page 140)*
*(amended 2008 Synod Report, pages 148–150)*
*(amended 2014 Synod Report, page 129)*

A. Any individual member of the synod who has undergone disciplinary action by a congregation, or a circuit visitor, or a synodical board or the synod's president shall have the right to appeal to the synod.

B. Any congregation which has undergone disciplinary action by the circuit visitor and the synod's president shall have the right to appeal to the synod for a review of the action of these officials.

C. The appeal shall be addressed in writing to the secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod's Board of Trustees. The appellant shall state the specific points of suspension that are appealed.

D. A Board of Appeals is hereby established and will be called upon to serve in those situations that are otherwise defined in these guidelines. Eleven clergymen and seven laymen will be elected to serve terms of three years. Each year the Committee on Nominations will nominate twelve men for the board (see Convention Guidelines, Article IX.B.1), keeping in mind the described balance of clergymen and laymen that are required on the full board. Six will be elected. Members may not serve more than two consecutive terms. Those elected to the Board of Appeals may serve in other synod positions except as a synodical officer or as a member of the Board of Trustees. A Commission on an Appeal would be drawn only when there would be a specific need. (As a body, the Board of Appeals will not meet.)

E. At a time when it is necessary to employ a specific Commission on an Appeal, the appellant as well as the Board of Trustees shall each have the right to remove the name of one person from the Board of Appeals before the Commission on the Appeal is selected.

F. The Commission on the Appeal shall be selected by a blind draw conducted by the Board of Trustees. In the situation wherein the president has suspended the appealing party, the president and vice president shall absent themselves from the meeting room when the commission members are being selected. The secretary—unless he is a party to the dispute, in which case the Board of Trustees shall select another member—shall chair the board while it goes about selecting the commission members from the standing slate. The board shall draw the names of three (3) clergymen and two (2) laymen who will serve as the commission on the appeal. No member of the commission shall be a party involved in the case. Anyone who may have a conflict of interest, or who has made public statements regarding the issue, or has taken a public position on the issue should be recused by himself or by the Board of Trustees. The president of the synod shall NOT be an advisory member of the commission on the appeal. The commission shall organize itself by electing a chairman and secretary and shall proceed in a timely fashion.

G. The conduct of the review shall rest solely with the commission on the appeal. The commission shall have the right and power to examine all documentary evidence and to require such testimony which in its judgment is relevant to the appellant's case. The decision of the commission shall be the final disposition of the appeal and shall be respected by all the members of the synod.

H. The decision of the commission shall be filed with the president and the secretary of the synod and recorded in the annual Synod Report. By this recording the Commission on the Appeal shall be dismissed.

**Article VI: Reports and Records of Discipline and an Appeal**

The reports and records concerning discipline and reports and records of a commission on an appeal shall be deposited with the archivist of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod not later than five years after the final actions have been taken, and shall be considered sealed materials for 50 years after the date of the report. After 50 years, the Committee

on Archives and History, or its successor, may authorize research using those reports and records. (see Guidelines for the Committee for Archives and History of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Article IV)

# Operational Guidelines



# Section 310
# Guidelines for the Board of Trustees of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod

### Article I: Governance

*(amended 2015 Synod Report, page 125)*

A. The government of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod shall be vested in a board of nine (9) trustees, two (2) of whom shall be the president and secretary elected at the corporation's annual meeting as hereinafter provided.

B. The president and the secretary shall be elected for a term of four (4) years. The remaining trustees shall be elected for three (3) year terms. Officers and trustees shall be elected as their terms expire. At the same time the president is elected, a vice president, who shall be an advisory member of the board, unless he succeeds to the office of president, shall be elected for a four (4) year term (see Articles of Incorporation of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Article VIII)

C. There shall not at any one time be more than five (5) or less than three (3) pastors on the Board of Trustees.

### Article II: Internal Organization

*(amended 2005 Synod Report, page 130)*
*(amended 2012 Synod Report, page 139)*
*(amended 2015 Synod Report, page 126)*
*(amended 2024 Synod Report, page 177)*

A. The president of the corporation shall perform the duties usually assigned to that office. (see Bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Chapter VII, Paragraph 1)

B. The vice president of the corporation shall serve as an advisory member of the board and shall assume the duties of the chairman in the latter's absence and shall become chairman in the event that the regularly elected chairman is unable to serve. (see Bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Chapter VII, Paragraph 2; Articles of Incorporation of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Article VIII)

C. The secretary of the corporation shall prepare an agenda for each quarterly meeting and submit this to each member of the board at least two weeks in advance of each quarterly meeting. He shall have available for the convention review committee the minutes of the previous year. He shall have custody of the corporate seal of the synod. In addition, refer to General Synodical Guidelines, Article III.C.

D. The position of synod treasurer shall be appointed by the Board of Trustees who shall establish the salary and benefits of the position and review the performance and remuneration on an annual basis. He shall be responsible for the accurate recording of the receipt and disbursement of all synodical funds and shall function under the direction of the Board of Trustees. He shall give such bond for the faithful performance of his duties as the board may direct.

E. The synod authorizes the board to provide residences, when necessary, for its professors at Bethany Lutheran College and Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary.

F. The board is responsible for the proper equipping of the synod's offices and facilities.

G. Ordinarily the board shall meet on a quarterly basis. Special meetings, including conferences by telephone or other technological means, may be called by the chairman of the board. However, the board shall not meet on less than two days notice, oral or written, without the consent of the majority of the board.

**Article III: Duties of the Board**

*(amended 2003 Synod Report, pages 128–129)*
*(amended 2009 Synod Report, page 123)*
*(amended 2011 Synod Report, page 126)*
*(amended 2012 Synod Report, pages 137, 139)*
*(amended 2014 Synod Report, pages 114, 129)*
*(amended 2015 Synod Report, pages 126, 127)*
*(amended 2019 Synod Report, page 127)*

"The trustees shall have the general management and control of all secular business and temporal affairs of said corporation. All such business and affairs they shall conduct in accordance with the constitution, bylaws, rules and resolutions of the synod." (see Articles of Incorporation of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Article IX)

A. As custodians of the synod's properties:
   1. It shall be the board's duty to hold all properties of the synod in the name of the synod or in the name of its wholly owned subsidiary Bethany Lutheran College, Inc., and represent the synod in legal matters. It shall be authorized to act as the agent of the synod in the procurement of property or the sale of property upon the recommendation of the properly constituted boards of the synod and their approval of the same. It shall carry out the resolutions of the convention of the synod. It shall report all such transactions to the regular conventions of the synod.
   2. The board shall be the recipient of bequests and gifts made to the synod and as such shall make due acknowledgement of such receipts. It shall inform the proper board of such receipts and any instructions which may have been included in such bequests for the proper use of the same.
   3. The Committee for Archives and History shall function under the direction of the board. The authority, responsibilities and duties of the board in respect to the committee are stated in Guidelines for the Committee for Archives and History, especially Article I, Article IV and Article V.
   4. In the event that the synod should be incorporated in other states than Minnesota and Wisconsin as at present, the board shall make such recommendations to the synod convention.

B. As custodians of the Synod Fund: The board shall approve all expenditures from the Synod Fund. It shall prepare an estimate of the needs of this fund each year for inclusion in the annual budget of the synod.

C. As custodians of the Church Extension and Loan Fund of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod:
   1. The board shall assist missions and established congregations to secure real estate and to erect, purchase or improve churches, schools and parsonages.
   2. The board shall administer the fund income and disbursements.

D. Loans:
   1. The Board of Trustees shall be authorized to make loans from the fund to home mission congregations or established congregations.
   2. Established congregations desiring a loan should make a written application to the Board of Trustees. Applications by home mission congregations should be made through the synod's Board for Home Outreach.
   3. The loan will be evidenced by a promissory note and, where applicable, secured by a first or second mortgage on the property.
   4. Mutually agreeable interest rates and repayment schedules will be negotiated in each individual case on the basis of current circumstances.
   5. When circumstances warrant, the Board of Trustees shall consider the possibility of guaranteeing a loan obtained from a financial institution.
   6. If circumstances warrant, the Board of Trustees may consider granting an interest subsidy.
   7. Congregations with loans shall submit a written financial and progress report to the Board of Trustees for its quarterly meetings.
   8. If a congregation with a loan from the Evangelical Lutheran Synod withdraws its membership from the synod, the unpaid balance of such loan shall become due and payable as of the date of such withdrawal. In cases where payment is in default, the Board of Trustees is authorized to make the necessary decisions.
   9. The Board of Trustees shall submit a report of the "Church Extension and Loan Fund of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod" to the annual convention of the synod, including a statement of the standing of each account.

E. The board shall acknowledge receipt of all legacies in the annual *Synod Report*. The board shall address a letter of appreciation to the closest relative or relatives of the testator and to the congregation of which he or she was a member.

F. The board shall establish:
   1. A mileage reimbursement rate for the costs of travel by synod officers and board and committee members on synod business.
   2. A reimbursement rate to be used in the calculations for pastors' and delegates' equalization.
   3. The per diem for lodging and meals for pastors and professors emeriti.

G. The board shall establish other travel policies. Reimbursement for travel shall be the lower of mileage at the established rate or representative air fare as established by the synod.

H. The salary and benefits of synod staff members are established and monitored by the Board of Trustees in consultation with the respective boards and committees. The expense of the salaries and benefits may be charged to the boards and committees that the staff members serve. Before the hiring or calling of staff, the board shall approve salary and benefits packages.

I. The board shall fulfill its duties as required in Chapter VII, Paragraph 5, of the Bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod. When the board receives a report from the investigating committee that the charges have been substantiated, the board is required to act on that decision in a timely manner; the board shall not retry the case. In determining its action, the board may consult with the investigating committee.

J. The board shall determine the synod contribution for the Retirement Contribution Plan for Pastors and Teachers contingent upon the availability of funds from the Marvin M. Schwan Charitable Foundation or other synod funding. (See Guidelines for the Board for Christian Service, Article III.B.)

K. Periodically the board shall establish the threshold amount of borrowing as required when planning capital projects. (see Guidelines for the Board of Trustees of Bethany Lutheran College, Inc., Article III.C.4.)

L. The board may provide assignments to the Synod Review Committee (See Guidelines for the Synod Review Committee, Article II.A.).

**Article IV: Synodical Budget Operations**

*See Guidelines for the Planning and Coordinating Committee, Article V*

**Article V: Synodical Stewardship**

*(adopted 2012 Synod Report, pages 139–140)*
*(amended 2024 Synod Report, page 176)*
*(amended 2025 Synod Report, pages 186–187)*

A. The Board of Trustees shall engage or call a Giving Counselor who shall be responsible to the board and under the supervision of the synod president.

B. The Giving Counselor: The board is responsible for the position of Giving Counselor. His work for the synod is part of the Lord's overall kingdom work. It is designed to assist members of the synod to grow in the grace of giving by making gifts to the synod and its entities that are current and/or deferred. The ultimate purpose is to glorify God through a wise use and disposition of the material blessings that He places into our hands. The work of the synod's Giving Counselor is to serve God and His people.
   1. The board acts as the policy-setting body and assumes ultimate responsibility for the position. The president exercises direct control and responsibility over this position. The Giving Counselor is responsible to the synod president for identifying, cultivating and soliciting donors throughout the synod.
   2. The candidate is a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod or one who is willing to join the synod. He needs to possess skills in public speaking, writing and human relations. He must have an understanding of fund-raising, financial planning and insurance related issues, or be willing to be trained in these essentials.
   3. The duty and responsibility of the position is to cultivate Christian stewardship in the synod and its congregations and to perform other related duties and responsibilities as assigned by the president.
      a. Promote Christian stewardship on the basis of biblical principles.
      b. Offer encouragement to the members of the synod in the financial support of their local congregational outreach, the support of their called workers and the mission outreach of the

synod. When funding is available, conduct seminars or workshops on the topic of Christian stewardship.

c. Prepare and provide stewardship materials for use in the parishes of the synod. These materials shall be made available regularly for pastors and their congregations.

d. Provide instructional and motivational guidance to individual congregations for their own local stewardship efforts upon receiving a request from the congregation for the board's assistance.

4. Provide support and advice to the synod's boards and committees upon request.

5. The annual report of the Giving Counselor will be included in the report of the board.

C. All new synod-wide appeals for funds by synodical boards or individuals, as well as for ad hoc committees, must be submitted to and coordinated by the Giving Counselor, and approved by the president and by the Board of Trustees.

**Article VI: Meetings of the Board**

Ordinarily the board shall meet on a quarterly basis. Special meetings, including conferences by telephone or other technical means, may be called by the chairman of the board. However, the board shall not meet on less than two days notice, oral or written, without the consent of the majority of the board.

**Article VII: The Relationship Between the Board of Trustees and the Board for Home Outreach**

*See Guidelines for the Board for Home Outreach, Article V*

**Article VIII: Loans From the Synod for Home Outreach Projects**

*See Guidelines for the Board for Home Outreach, Article V*

**Article IX: Administration of Specially Financed Programs**

*(amended 2015 Synod Report, page 127)*
*See Bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod Foundation, Article VII*

**Article X: The Relationship Between the Board of Trustees and the Board of Regents and the Establishment of a Regents–Trustees Subcommittee**

*See Guidelines for the Board of Trustees of Bethany Lutheran College, Inc., Article III*

**Article XI: The Relationship Between the Board of Trustees and the Board for World Outreach**

*(amended 2016 Synod Report, page 143)*
*See Guidelines for the Board for World Outreach, Article V*

**Article XII: The Relationship Between the Board of Trustees and the Board for Lutheran Schools**

*(adopted 2006 Synod Report, page 127)*
*(amended 2010 Synod Report, page 149)*
*(amended 2015 Synod Report, page 123)*

A. All loans from the Lutheran Schools of America, Inc. fund shall be negotiated with the Board of Trustees with the understanding that loans shall be made in accordance with the synod guidelines entitled "Loans From the Synod For Home Outreach Projects" (see Guidelines for the Board for Home Outreach, Article VI). The title of property acquired for the purposes of the LSA will be held by the Board of Trustees for the synod (see Bylaws of the Lutheran Schools of America, Article IV.B.3 and 4).

B. The Board of Trustees shall report the amount of funds available to the Board for Lutheran Schools every November (see Bylaws of the Lutheran Schools of America, Article IV.A.3).

# Section 312
# Guidelines for the Committee for Archives and History of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod

*(adopted 2014 Synod Report, page 128)*

The Committee for Archives and History collects and maintains documents and artifacts connected with the history of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod and its predecessor and, more broadly, Lutheranism in America, provides for the use and exhibit of these items, and develops programs to stimulate interest in the history of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

### Article I: Organization and Personnel

A. The committee shall function under the jurisdiction of the Board of Trustees of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod. Suggestions for membership may be proposed by the committee, but the board will elect the members of the committee who will serve three year staggered terms. The number of members and the clergy/lay distribution shall be a decision of the board.

B. The committee shall elect a chairman and a secretary from its membership. The chairman shall prepare the agenda for each meeting and shall chair the meeting. The chairman or a representative will make a physical presentation to the Board of Trustees once annually and other times as requested. In the absence of the chairman, the secretary may perform the chairman's duties unless the committee determines otherwise. The duties of the secretary are defined in General Synodical Guidelines, Article III.C. The committee may add additional responsibilities and duties.

C. The committee has the authority to appoint an archivist and a museum director, and other staff positions as necessary. The authority to fill a specific position must be granted by the Board of Trustees which will also determine the salary and benefits of the employee.

D. There should be at least one face-to-face meeting of the committee each year. Additional meetings may be scheduled by the committee or the chairman. The archivist, the museum director and an officer of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod Historical Society will report to each regular meeting of the committee. Meetings by conference call or other technological means may be held according to rules established by the committee.

### Article II: Purpose

A. The preservation of historical material that might otherwise be lost to the synod.

B. Making such materials available to individuals both within and without the synod.

C. The active promotion of a program in the synod to stimulate interest in the synod's history and in the historical materials that are available.

D. The publishing of articles, both scholarly and popular, of historical interest in synodical periodicals such as the *Lutheran Sentinel* and the *Lutheran Synod Quarterly* or other appropriate publications, thus bringing the benefits of the materials in the archives and the museum to the synod in general.

E. Promoting an interest in the synod's congregations in their individual histories.

### Article III: Committee Responsibilities

A. The committee shall oversee the Synod Archives, the Ottesen Museum and the Evangelical Lutheran Synod Historical Society. It shall advocate for these programs, and promote their work at synod conventions, pastoral conferences and other venues and occasions where appropriate. The committee shall prepare a policy statement or internal guidelines to implement these responsibilities.

B. The committee has a supervisory role in relation to the Evangelical Lutheran Synod Historical Society that was created by the Committee for Archives and History. Specifically this means that it offers encouragement, makes suggestions as to effective programs and projects for the society, reviews periodic reports and carries out assessment of the programs and projects of the society with a view toward continual improvement. An officer of the Historical Society shall be an advisory member of the Committee on Archives and History.

C. The committee shall coordinate its plans and activities with the Bethany Lutheran College Archives Committee and its archivist, and with the Evangelical Lutheran Synod Historical Society.

**Article IV: Ownership of Donated Material and its Use**

A. Donated archival and historical materials to the Evangelical Lutheran Synod are the property of the synod. Restrictions on the use or exhibition of these materials may be requested by the donor and agreed to by the archivist or the museum director. Requests for unusual restrictions may be brought to the Committee on Archives and History.

B. The archivist and the museum director shall have discretion in determining the material that will be accepted and maintained.

C. All property owned by the synod is the responsibility of the Board of Trustees (see Guidelines for the Board of Trustees, Article III.A.1). Therefore, disagreements relating to the collection, use, retention or ownership of donated archival and historical material shall be resolved by the Board of Trustees.

D. Access to archival material shall be gained only through the archivist; researchers shall do their work under the supervision of the archivist.

E. Exhibition and display of museum property shall be under the direction and discretion of the museum director.

**Article V: Finances**

The Board of Trustees shall include an annual budget for the Archives and History Committee in the Synod Fund. A report of that budget shall be available at each committee meeting,

**Article VI: Records of Synodical Discipline and Appeals**

Reports and records of synodical discipline and corresponding appeals therefrom shall be filed with the archivist in accordance with Guidelines for Synodical Discipline and Appeal, Article VI.

# Section 320
# Guidelines for the Evangelical Lutheran Synod Board of Regents

*(adopted 2017 Synod Report, page 150)*
*(also see Educational Guidelines, Guidelines for the Evangelical Lutheran Synod Board of Regents)*

### Article I: Membership

Bethany Lutheran College, Inc. meets concurrently with the convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod the members of which are also members of Bethany Lutheran College, Inc. The Evangelical Lutheran Synod at its annual meeting elects men from its membership to serve on the Board of Regents (see Bylaws of Bethany Lutheran College, Inc., Article I and Guidelines for the Evangelical Lutheran Synod Board of Regents, Article II). The Board of Regents is the governing board of Bethany Lutheran College, Inc.

### Article II: Purpose

The purpose of the Board of Regents is to govern and set policies for both Bethany Lutheran College and Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary, Mankato, Minnesota (educational institutions of Bethany Lutheran College, Inc.).

### Article III: Relationships

A. The members of the Board of Regents are elected by the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (see Article I and Article II) and the board reports to its annual meeting. Because the president of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (synod president) shall "supervise the work of the synod and its elected boards and committees" (Bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Chapter VII, Paragraph 1, b), he is also responsible to see that the Board of Regents upholds the doctrinal, biblical and confessional standards of the synod. Therefore, the president of the synod, by virtue of his office as president of Bethany Lutheran College, Inc., serves as a voting member of the Board of Regents.

B. The Board of Regents also selects members of its board to be on the joint Regents/Trustees subcommittee (see Guidelines for the Board of Trustees of Bethany Lutheran College, Inc., Article III).

C. The synod Board of Trustees govern Bethany Lutheran College and Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary with respect to the property (see Articles of Restatement of the Articles of Incorporation of Bethany Lutheran College, Inc., Article VI and Guidelines for the Board of Trustees of Bethany Lutheran College, Inc., Article I). All other matters of trusteeship and governance are assigned to the Board of Regents

# Section 330
# Guidelines for the Doctrine Committee

**Preamble**

*(adopted 2016 Synod Report, page 138)*

The Doctrine Committee exists to advise the president and synod on doctrinal matters, and in upholding the doctrine of Scripture and the confessional principles and practices of the synod.

**Article I: Membership and Organization**

*(amended 2016 Synod Report, page 138)*

A. The Doctrine Committee shall consist of seven voting members: two laymen, four clergymen and the president of Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary. The vice president of the synod shall be an advisory member.

B. The committee shall elect a chairman and a secretary from its midst. The duties of the secretary are defined in General Synodical Guidelines, Article III.C.

C. The committee shall meet at least twice per year at least one meeting of which must be a face-to-face meeting. Special meetings may be called by the chairman, by a majority of the voting members of the board or by the president. However, the board shall not meet on less than two days' notice, oral or written, without the unanimous consent of the board. A majority of the voting members of the board shall constitute a quorum. There shall be no proxy voting.

D. Members of the committee shall be elected for a term of three (3) years. Two members shall be elected each year.

**Article II: Duties**

*(amended 2009 Synod Report, page 127)*
*(amended 2016 Synod Report, page 138)*

A. To keep abreast of doctrinal trends and issues and keep laity and clergy informed.

B. To advise the president in matters of doctrine and practice.

C. To provide information to the synod concerning fraternal organizations and similar religious groups.

D. To encourage continued theological study on the part of the members of the synod.

E. To assist the president of the synod in the maintenance of fraternal relations with church bodies which are in doctrinal agreement with the synod, and to seek out other church bodies which may wish to share in this oneness of faith and doctrine.

F. To keep informed, through an individual member of the committee or a subcommittee, of issues in government, law, and society which may encroach on the religious freedom or exercise of confessional freedom, and to communicate such information to the other committees and to the synodical membership in venues open to the committee.

# Section 341
# Guidelines for the Board for Home Outreach

*(adopted 2012 Synod Report, pages 140–142)*

**Preamble**

*(adopted 2016 Synod Report, page 138)*

Inasmuch as our Lord commands that His Church, both collectively and individually, have as its primary mission the communication of the unconditioned gospel to all humanity, it follows that each member of His body should be trained and equipped to engage others more faithfully with Jesus not only by a Christian life, but also by verbal communication. The board exists to encourage and equip congregations of the synod in the United States and Canada in the work of outreach and evangelism, providing resources as needed.

**Article I: Membership and Organization**

*(amended 2016 Synod Report, page 139)*
*(amended 2021 Synod Report, page 191)*
*(amended 2024 Synod Report, page 177)*

A. Membership
   1. The Board for Home Outreach shall consist of nine members: seven Type A and two Type B. Type A membership shall be made up of not more than four nor fewer than three clergymen. Type B membership shall be made up of at least one clergyman. These members shall be elected at the regular meeting of the corporation (Type A), and appointed by the board and ratified by the convention (Type B).
   2. Type A members shall be elected for three-year staggered terms by the voting members of the corporation at an annual meeting.
   3. Type B members shall be appointed by the board for a term of three years. Appointees shall be ratified at the next annual convention of the corporation and shall begin to serve upon such ratification. No Type B member shall serve more than two consecutive full terms. Members may be appointed and ratified as the initial terms expire.
   4. The Evangelism and Missions Counselor (see Article IV) shall serve as an advisory member of the board.

B. The board shall elect from its members a chairman and a secretary. The chairman shall call and preside over all the meetings of the board. He shall prepare the agenda for each meeting. He shall be a member of the ELS Pastoral Assignment Committee. The duties of the secretary are defined in General Synodical Guidelines, Article III.C.

C. The board shall meet at least twice per year; at least one must be a face-to-face meeting. Meetings by electronic means are permissible according to rules established by the board. Special meetings may be called by the chairman or by a majority of the voting members of the board. However, the board shall not meet on less than two days' notice, oral or written, without the unanimous consent of the board. A majority of the voting members of the board shall constitute a quorum. There shall be no proxy voting.

**Article II: Duties**

*(amended 2016 Synod Report, pages 138–139)*

A. Devlop materials to encourage and equip congregations of the synod in the work of outreach and evangelism, which may include the study of and recommendations concerning printed, audio, video, and computer-related materials; and conducting workshops and seminars.

B. The board shall counsel with, support, and pray for the workers, exploratory missions and congregations of the synod and encourage them to be faithful stewards of the mysteries of God.

C. The board shall arrange for financial aid from synodically budgeted funds to subsidize approved congregational programs and exploratory missions that the Gospel ministry in their midst may be improved and expanded.

D. Since opportunities for engaging others more faithfully with Jesus are to be sought in locations not served by churches of our fellowship, it shall be the duty of the board:

1. To locate promising mission fields and establish congregations in agreement with the confession of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.
2. To call qualified men from the Evangelical Lutheran Synod or from its wider fellowship to serve exploratory missions in accordance with God's Word: "And how shall they preach unless they are sent," (Romans 10:14) and the Lutheran Confessions: "Of ecclesiastical order we teach that no one should publicly teach in the church or administer the sacraments unless he is rightfully called," AC XIV, *Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary*, p. 11.
3. To oversee and support the growth of such congregations and/or parishes with such assistance and guidance as the board can render.
4. To recommend a salary scale and benefit package for its missionaries in keeping with the current economy and include its recommendations in its report to the synod.

E. The board shall prepare a budget and present it to the Planning and Coordinating Committee annually.

**Article III: Procedure for Issuing Calls**

When an exploratory mission has been organized as a congregation and is proceeding to call its pastor, the visitor of the circuit shall be informed and shall normally conduct the call meeting unless other arrangements are made by the president of the synod in consultation with the board and the circuit visitor. A call issued by a mission congregation must also be signed by a designated representative of the board.

**Article IV: Evangelism and Missions Counselor**

A. The purpose of the office of Evangelism and Missions Counselor (EMC) is to increase the effectiveness of the Board for Home Outreach by:
   1. Assisting in planning and conducting the gospel outreach program,
   2. Assisting the missionaries and the congregations that they serve.
   3. Promoting commitment to mission work by the synod's congregations.

B. The EMC will serve as staff to the Board for Home Outreach. Duties for the office are contained in internal guidelines prepared by the board.

C. The EMC will be accountable to the board. He will not be a voting member of the board.

D. For the salary and benefits of the EMC, see Guidelines for the Board of Trustees, Article III.H.

**Article V: The Relationship Between the Board for Home Outreach and the Board of Trustees**

*(see Guidelines for the Board of Trustees, Article VII)*

A. The Board for Home Outreach, after thorough investigation, shall make known to the Board of Trustees any planning or progress in mission establishment where the synod's resources for capital expenditures may be needed. The Board for Home Outreach shall include this information in its quarterly report to the Board of Trustees.

B. The report and any recommendation from the Board for Home Outreach to the Board of Trustees shall include:
   1. The present and projected membership of the congregation.
   2. The plan for lots, church building, parsonage.
   3. The cost.
   4. The timing.
   5. The sources of financing available from the congregation, from mission resources, and from other sources. The Board of Trustees shall make arrangements for any loan.
   6. The potential repayment plan.

C. When these points have been discussed and agreed upon, a plan of implementation shall be agreed upon between the two boards for each individual project. This plan shall include an outline of the responsibilities of each board in each case.

D. The Board of Trustees has the responsibility and authority to make the final decision in all matters involving financial obligations. (see Constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Chapter V, Paragraph 1; Articles of Incorporation of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Article VIII)

**Article VI: Loans from the Synod for Home Outreach Projects**

*(see Guidelines for the Board of Trustees, Article VIII)*

A. Land Purchase

1. The purchase of land will ordinarily be considered only when the congregation or mission station demonstrates to the Board for Home Outreach its financial ability to support a loan. Operating subsidy will continue to decline according to the proposed schedule.
2. Interest for land purchases will be set at a rate to be determined by the Board of Trustees.
3. The synod will subsidize such loans for three years at the following rates: 100% of the interest for the first year, 75% of the interest for the second year, and 50% of the interest for the third year. Land loans are calculated on a 10 year amortization. Sample amortization schedules are available from the Board for Home Outreach.
4. The Board for Home Outreach will be responsible for beginning the construction of a building for worship within four years.
5. The congregation will be responsible for obtaining tax exempt status on purchased land.
6. After the building is erected on the land, the remaining land debt will be combined with the building debt. All remaining debt will fall under the building purchase subsidy plan for permanent financing.
7. All payments are to be made in keeping with the agreed upon amortization schedule.
8. The Evangelical Lutheran Synod will ordinarily hold title to the land.

B. Construction Financing
1. The construction of a building will be considered only when the congregation demonstrates to the board its financial ability to support a loan for such construction. Operating subsidy will continue to decline according to the proposed schedule.
2. Construction money is loaned after permanent financing has been secured. There are no points or fees assessed to construction financing. Interest on short-term loans for construction will be set in accordance with Article III.D. of the Guidelines for the Board of Trustees and reset after 8 months. Interest is billed monthly and is to be paid accordingly. All moneys borrowed for construction are to be repaid soon after the building is occupied or the permanent financing is in place.
3. The Evangelical Lutheran Synod will ordinarily hold title to the property on which the construction is taking place.

C. Permanent Financing
1. The construction of a building, or the purchase of a building, will be considered only when the congregation demonstrates to the board its financial ability to support a loan for a building.
2. Operating subsidy will continue to decline according to the proposed schedule.
3. Interest for the permanent financing of a building will be set according to the lender's rate at the time the loan is made. The length of these loans is ordinarily 15 years.
4. [deleted]
5. All payments are to be made in keeping with the agreed upon amortization schedule which will be furnished by the Board for Home Outreach.
6. The Evangelical Lutheran Synod will ordinarily hold title to mission property. As long as the synod holds title to the property, the following requirements shall apply regarding property improvements:
    a. If improvements are necessary or desirable, such improvements shall be undertaken in consultation with the Board for Home Outreach and the Board of Trustees both of which boards will make the decision. No change in structure, exterior or interior, shall be made without the approval of both boards. If the congregation proceeds with an expenditure without the approval of both boards, the congregation is responsible for payment for the improvement. An exception will be made to the foregoing requirements when immediate action is required to protect or preserve the property.
    b. The congregation will be responsible to provide adequate insurance coverage on the property and will provide the synod's Board of Trustees with verification of such adequate insurance.
    c. In the event that a congregation has purchased a building for renovation into a church building, the congregation is to seek tax exempt status as soon as possible.
    d. Until such time as the congregation takes title to the property (pays the debt), and if it is found necessary to sell all or part of the property, and there has been a significant fluctuation in the value of the property, proper regard for each other will be shown by both the Board of Trustees and the congregation.

**Article VII: Disbursements of the Partners in the Gospel Fund**
*See Bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod Foundation, Article VII*

**Article VIII: Acknowledgement of a Mission Call**
*See Guidelines for the Pastor's Ordination and Installation, Article I*

**Article IX: Guidelines for Synodical Discipline and Appeals**
*See Guidelines for Synodical Discipline and Appeal, Article II*

# Section 345
# Guidelines for the Board for World Outreach

*(adopted 2016 Synod Report, pages 117–122)*

**Preamble**

As its share of the responsibilities commanded by Jesus Christ in Matthew 28:19–20, the Board for World Outreach will initiate and assist in the spreading of the gospel throughout the world except in the United States and Canada which charge has been given to the Board for Home Outreach.

**Article I: Board Membership, Officers, and Their Duties**

*(amended 2024 Synod Report, page 177)*

A. Membership
   1. The Board for World Outreach shall consist of nine members: seven Type A and two Type B (see Bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Chapter V, Paragraph 1.d). Type A membership shall be made up of not more than four nor fewer than three clergymen. Type B membership shall be made up of at least one clergyman. These members shall be elected at the regular meeting of the corporation (Type A), and appointed by the board and ratified by the convention (Type B).
   2. Type A members shall be elected for three-year staggered terms by the voting members of the corporation at an annual meeting.
   3. Type B members shall be appointed by the board for a term of three years. Appointees shall be ratified at the next annual convention of the corporation and shall begin to serve upon such ratification. No Type B member shall serve more than two consecutive full terms. Members may be appointed and ratified as the initial terms expire.

B. The board shall elect from its members a chairman, vice chairman and recording secretary. The board may designate committees whose members it shall elect (see General Synodical Guidelines, Article III.E). The board may also call or hire individuals to such positions as it deems necessary to conduct its business. e.g., World Outreach Administrator, Missions Field Coordinator and secretaries. While the called or hired positions are authorized, they are not mandated (see Article IV and the note). The board shall prepare its own internal guidelines that may include duties in addition to those that are in these guidelines.

C. Duties of the officers:
   1. The chairman, on behalf of the board, shall call and preside over all the meetings of the board and shall prepare the agenda for each meeting in consultation with the Administrator. He shall supervise the work of the World Outreach Administrator.
   2. The vice chairman shall preside in the absence of the chairman.
   3. The duties of the recording secretary are defined in General Synodical Guidelines, Article III.C.
   4. The duties of the treasurer will be administered by the office of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod treasurer.

D. The board shall meet at least twice each year, one of which must be a face-to-face meeting. Meetings by electronic means are permissible according to rules established by the board. Special meetings may be called by the chairman or by a majority of the voting members of the board. The board shall not meet on less than two days notice, oral or written, without the unanimous consent of the board. A majority of the voting members of the board shall constitute a quorum. There shall be no proxy voting.

**Article II: Duties**

A. In general it shall be the duty of the board to locate promising world mission fields and, with the authorization of the synod, to establish missions in accordance with the doctrine and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

B. In keeping with the Great Commission ("All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age"—Matthew 28:18–20 NKJV), the board shall have the responsibility to call qualified men from the Evangelical Lutheran Synod or from its wider fellowship to fill positions created by vacancies in the

missionary staff, and subject to synod authorization through the Board of Trustees, to make necessary additions to the staff.

C. The board shall counsel with, support and pray for the missionaries and the church bodies under its jurisdiction and shall encourage them to be faithful stewards of the mysteries of God.

D. The board shall keep accurate records.

E. Annually the board shall submit a detailed budget request to the Missions Advancement Project, Inc. (MAP) for the portion of the board budget that is specially funded through MAP.

F. The board shall recommend a salary scale and benefit package for its missionaries in keeping with the current economies of the respective mission fields and include its recommendation in its report to the synod for synodical approval.

G. Before requesting synod action to abandon a given field, the board shall make a careful survey of the situation and report to the synod. (The withdrawing of missionaries or staff members does not of itself mean that the field is abandoned.)

H. The board shall be responsible for establishing priorities for the fields, budgeting, and deciding major and/or difficult issues brought forward by each committee.

**Article III: Committees**

A. Membership for each committee authorized by Article I.B shall consist of at least one clergy and one lay member.

B. Duties of the regional committees:

1. Generally each committee shall meet twice annually and more if needed. Committee chairmen shall arrange for committee meetings in conjunction with each plenary meeting of the board.
2. Each committee is responsible for the tasks assigned to it, and shall implement programs and activities carried out in the respective fields, including liaison correspondence with, and advice to, the fields receiving support from the synod.
3. Each committee shall carry out the objectives and policies set by the board and shall provide regular reports to the board through the committee chairman.
4. Each committee shall counsel and pray for the missionaries under the its jurisdiction and shall encourage them to be faithful stewards of the mysteries of God.
5. Each committee shall work together with the World Outreach Administrator in carrying out its business.
6. Cooperatively, the committee chairs shall prepare the budget of the board and the board shall submit it to the Planning and Coordinating Committee (see Guidelines for the Planning and Coordinating Committee, Article III).

C. Additional subcommittees may be established for administrative purposes (budget, personnel, policy, etc.) and also be governed by appropriate guidelines established by the board (see General Synodical Guidelines, Article III.E).

**Article IV: The Office of World Outreach Administrator**

*(amended 2025 Synod Report, page 186)*

A. General duties:

1. Assist planning and conduct the work of the board, including day-to-day management.
2. Promote missions by preaching, teaching and distributing print and digital media.
3. Assist missionaries and fields.
4. Monitor finances and statistics.
5. Study missiology.

B. Specific duties:

1. Pray.
2. Coordinate committees with the board chair.
3. Visit the fields.
4. Arrange conferences and meetings.
5. Coordinate fraternal relations among the foreign mission fields of the board and with other church bodies of our fellowship where their work impacts our foreign mission fields.
6. Counsel called workers.
7. Coordinate furlough deputations when scheduling local mission presentations.

8. With the committee chairmen, prepare the report to the synod convention.
9. Monitor reports from fields and provide summaries for the board.
10. Facilitate fund raising as opportunities arise.

C. Additional duties to be performed as needed and as resources and time permit:
1. Locate new fields.
2. Mentor/train missionaries and lay workers.
3. Teach in the seminaries in the fields.
4. Coordinate U. S. training of national pastors.
5. Coordinate volunteers.
6. Coordinate humanitarian efforts.

**Article V: The Relationship between the Board for World Outreach and the Board of Trustees**

*(amended 2017 Synod Report, page 149)*

*(See Guidelines for the Board of Trustees, Article XI)*

A. When the Board for World Outreach concludes that the mission work is best served by the purchase of real estate property, it shall proceed in the following manner:
1. The Board for World Outreach shall make known to the Board of Trustees any need or plan for the purchase of real estate property. Its report shall include the need for the property, the location and the size of the property. The Board of Trustees shall review the report and respond with its recommendations.
2. Upon hearing from the Board of Trustees, the Board for World Outreach shall investigate the proposed property acquisition, keeping the Board of Trustees informed as it proceeds, and shall make recommendations to the Board of Trustees when it has completed such investigation. The final report and recommendations from the Board for World Outreach shall include:
a. The projected need and use of the property.
b. The description and location of the property.
c. The cost and the timing.
d. The source of available financing. The Board of Trustees shall make arrangements for any loan.
e. The potential repayment plan.
f. The assurance that the national church body, the congregation or the Evangelical Lutheran Synod is able to satisfy the legal requirements for the ownership of the property.
3. When these points have been considered and agreed upon, a plan of implementation between the two boards shall be established for each individual project. This plan shall include an outline of the responsibilities of each board in regard to the specific project.

B. Upon the recommendation of the Board for World Outreach, the Board of Trustees shall have the final determination regarding the disposition of any property.

D. The Board for World Outreach and the Board of Trustees shall establish a joint subcommittee to meet as necessary.

**Article VI: Discipline in Cases under the Jurisdiction of the Board**

*See Guidelines for Synodical Discipline and Appeal, Article III*

Note: The 92nd convention of the synod authorized the calling or hiring of a Missions Field Coordinator (see Article I.B., *Synod Report* 2009, p. 117). This position is not filled at this time; therefore there are no guidelines. At such time as someone may be called or hired for this position, guidelines will be required.

# Section 351
# Guidelines for the Committee on Worship

*(adopted 2016 Synod Report, pages 143–144)*

**Preamble**

The committee shall engage in an ongoing study of Lutheran Worship as it relates to the worship life of the synod's members. It shall work towards developing a greater understanding of the Lutheran heritage in Christian worship among those members, increasing their interest in that heritage; and informing the synod's pastors and congregations concerning the doctrine and practice of Lutheran worship and liturgy.

**Article I: Membership and Organization**

A. The Committee on Worship shall consist of five members, three of whom shall be clergymen and two shall be laymen. The terms of office shall be three years; the terms are to be staggered.

B. The committee shall elect from its own midst a chairman and a secretary. The chairman shall perform such duties as necessarily pertain to that office. The duties of the secretary are defined in General Synodical Guidelines, Article III.C.

C. The committee shall have at least one face-to-face meeting annually. Special meetings may be called by the chairman, by a majority of the voting members of the committee or by the synod president. However, it shall not meet on less than two days' notice, oral or written, without the unanimous consent of the committee. A majority of the voting members shall constitute a quorum.

**Article II: Duties, Responsibilities**

A. Assignments for the committee may be initiated by the convention, the General Pastoral Conference and the president of the synod. In consultation with the president of the synod, the committee may initiate its own assignments.

B. The committee shall uphold the provisions of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod Bylaws, Chapter I as further explained in *Synod Report*, 2012, p. 89, Report of the Committee on ELS Worship.

C. The committee shall keep abreast of trends, movements and new materials in all aspects of worship and shall consult regularly with faculty members who teach in the area of worship at Bethany Lutheran College and at Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary.

D. The committee shall submit a budget request to the Planning and Coordinating Committee to be included in the synod budget (see Guidelines for the Planning and Coordinating Committee, Article III).

E. When the committee has identified a project requiring non-budgeted funds, it shall submit a proposal to the Committee for Communication.

F. When the committee is ready to print a project, it shall submit a request for funds to the Board of Trustees.

# Section 353
# Guidelines for the Board for Youth Outreach

*(adopted 2012 Synod Report, pages 137–138)*

**Preamble**

*(adopted 2016 Synod Report, page 144)*

To promote the spiritual education and Christian fellowship of the youth of the synod, and to provide youth leadership training for the congregations.

**Article I: Organization of the Board**

A. The board shall consist of four clergy positions and three lay positions, elected by the synod for terms of three years.

B. Annually the board shall elect a chairman, a secretary and such other officers as it may desire. The chairman shall preside at the meetings and be responsible for the preparation of the agenda. The duties of the recording secretary are defined in General Synodical Guidelines, Article III.C.

C. The full board shall have at least one physical (face-to-face) meeting each year. Additional meetings, including those by conference call or other technological means, are allowable, according to rules established by the board. The chairman may call special meetings.

**Article II: Duties**

*(amended 2016 Synod Report, page 144)*

A. To assist congregations in the promotion and advancement of Sunday Schools and Vacation Bible Schools. To promote in-service training for Sunday School teachers, both at the congregation and circuit level.

B. To promote youth development to the glory of God and the welfare of the synod's congregations by:
   1. Encouraging the youth to reach out to others with the saving gospel of Christ.
   2. Promoting synod-wide annual Lutheran Youth Association conventions and circuit youth rallies with concrete suggestions for programs speakers and topics.
   3. Encouraging and conducting youth camps in the synod.
   4. Providing youth leadership training for teachers, officers and workers in the parish.

C. To promote youth education to the glory of God and the welfare of the synod's congregations by:
   1. Encouraging the youth to attend high schools and colleges of our fellowship.
   2. Developing and providing materials for congregations to send to college students, making use of the Committee for Communication for materials and coordination.

D. The board shall:
   1. Attend workshops and courses to keep informed and be better prepared for the work.
   2. Periodically review Sunday School and other educational materials from different publishers. Prepare reports and statistics on the progress of Sunday School and other part time educational agencies in the synod.
   3. Make arrangements with the synod president to provide for convention essays and/or other suitable material on education and youth.
   4. Keep informed, through an individual member of the board or a subcommittee, of issues in government, law, and society that may encroach on the religious freedom or exercise of confessional freedom, and to communicate such information to the other committees and to the synodical membership in venues open to the board.
   5. Submit an annual budget to the Planning and Coordinating Committee (see Guidelines for the Planning and Coordinating Committee, Article III).

# Section 354
# Guidelines for the Board on Apologetics

*(adopted 2022 Synod Report, pages 151–153)*

### Article I: Membership and Organization

A. The Board on Apologetics shall consist of five voting members: two laymen, two clergymen, and one clergy or layman.

B. The president of the synod shall participate as an advisory non-voting member.

C. The board shall elect a chairman, secretary, and treasurer from its members. The duties of the secretary are defined in the General Synodical Guidelines, Article III.C.

D. Ordinarily, regular meetings shall be held four times annually, either in person or electronically.

E. Members of the board shall be elected at regular conventions of the synod for staggered terms of three years.

### Article II: Duties of the Board

A. General board duties
   1. To uphold and encourage the biblical and Lutheran understanding and practice of Christian apologetics.
   2. To help keep members of the synod informed concerning Christian apologetics.
   3. To keep abreast of issues and worldviews that need to be or could be addressed by means of Christian apologetics.
   4. To apprise the presidents of the synod, seminary, and college in matters of Christian apologetics.

B. Board duties related to the Center for Apologetics and Worldviews (CAW)
   1. To review and revise as needed the mission and objectives of the Center for Apologetics and Worldviews and the duties of its director.
   2. To call from our clergy roster a qualified director for the Center for Apologetics and Worldviews or, if such a clergy member is not available, to appoint a qualified man as director who is firmly grounded in Lutheran doctrine and practice, and the heritage of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.
   3. To supervise and oversee the affairs of the Center for Apologetics and Worldviews, its director, and budgetary matters of the Center for Apologetics and Worldviews.
   4. To work with Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary and/or Bethany Lutheran College concerning the physical location, financial arrangements, and needs of the Center for Apologetics and Worldviews and its director, including teaching duties at the college and seminary as determined by the respective administrations.
   5. To help secure funding for the Center for Apologetics and Worldviews and its director, in accordance with existing synod policies.

### Article III: The Center for Apologetics and Worldviews (CAW)

A. Purpose of the Center for Apologetics and Worldviews

The Center for Apologetics and Worldviews (CAW) promotes evidence for the truth of Christianity and critiques competing worldviews to fortify Christians in biblical truth and to prepare them to answer questions and objections—with gentleness and respect—so Christ may be shared wisely and boldly in these post-Christian days.

In all its endeavors, the Center for Apologetics and Worldviews will be instructed and guided by the Lutheran Confessions, the biblical understanding of apologetics, and the doctrine and ecclesiastical culture of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS).

B. Director Qualifications:
   1. Be a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod clergy roster or, if not ordained, be a qualified man firmly grounded in biblical apologetics, Lutheran doctrine and practice, and the ecclesiastical culture of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod as a Confessional and liturgical church body, so that his endeavors will be in accord with this understanding and with those evangelical commitments (see Constitution of the ELS, Chapter I: Name and Confession, Paragraph 2–Paragraph 3; Bylaws of the ELS, Chapter I: Liturgical Forms and Ceremonies).
   2. Have experience in evangelism at home or in foreign lands, along with the ability to communicate with religiously diverse audiences.

3. Have pursued advanced education and training in an area or in areas that pertain to the subject matter of apologetics and worldview studies, or be one who is willing to pursue such advanced education and training.
4. Have personally studied various disciplines giving him a high level of knowledge regarding matters that fall within the purview of the Center for Apologetics and Worldviews.
5. Understand, agree with, and conduct his work in accordance with the teachings and commitments of synodically recognized apologetics study documents, statements, and essays.

C. Director Duties:
1. Promote the Center for Apologetics and Worldviews as a respected and influential Confessional Lutheran resource for information on the subjects that fall within the purview of the Center for Apologetics and Worldviews.
2. Recommend resources for the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Bethany Lutheran College, Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary, other Christian schools, congregations, and Christian homes.
3. Communicate with various synodical boards and committees in order to provide them with resources as well as gleaning insights from them regarding apologetics and worldview studies.
4. Help organize conferences, etc. for the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Bethany Lutheran College, Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary, other educational institutions, for congregations, for synodical boards, and other appropriate venues.
5. In cooperation with appropriate and established procedures and staff, recommend and enhance apologetics and worldview courses at Bethany Lutheran College and Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary.
6. Serve as an ambassador for, and as a promoter of, the larger mission and work of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Bethany Lutheran College, and Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary.
7. When invited, serve as an advisor and counselor to the congregations, boards, and officers of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod regarding subjects that fall within the purview of the Center for Apologetics and Worldviews.
8. Regularly report to the Board on Apologetics.

D. Financial management of the Center for Apologetics and Worldviews:
1. The Center for Apologetics and Worldviews shall maintain its own annual budget and statement of income and expenses.
2. Under the direction of the synod's Board of Trustees, the financial accounts of the Center for Apologetics and Worldviews will be administered by either Bethany Lutheran College or the Evangelical Lutheran Synod. The income and expenses of the Center for Apologetics and Worldviews shall remain segregated from Bethany Lutheran College and Evangelical Lutheran Synod operations.

# Section 355
# Guidelines for the Board for Christian Service

**Preamble**

*(amended 2016 Synod Report, page 145)*

The synod is concerned about the welfare of its retired pastors, teachers and other retired workers and their spouses, and for people who have suffered losses from situations beyond their control. To that end the synod, through its Board for Christian Service, according to its means, shall assist in their support.

**Article I: Membership and Organization**

*(amended 2016 Synod Report, page 145)*

A. The Board for Christian Service shall consist of two (2) clergymen and three (3) laymen, elected for three year terms.

B. The board shall elect its own chairman and secretary, annually, at its meeting following the synod convention. The duties of the secretary are defined in General Synodical Guidelines, Article III.C.

C. Meetings of the board shall be held at least semi-annually.

D. In time of an emergency, the committee shall consult with the administration of the synod.

**Article II: Duties of the Board**

*(amended 2009 Synod Report, page 128)*
*(amended 2016 Synod Report, page 145)*

A. Support for retired workers, widows, etc.
   1. It shall be the duty of the board to administer this support.
      a. To carry out this work, the board shall take the initiative in contacting eligible persons promptly, preferably with a personal visit by a member of the board or its appointed representative.
      b. It shall regularly contact each person receiving support to insure that adequate care is being provided.
      c. In case of emergency needs, the officers of the board shall be authorized to grant immediate aid and seek the approval of the full board by electronic means. Their action will be confirmed at the next regular board meeting.
   2. It shall be the right of the board to grant aid in any other case which it deems worthy.

B. Christian Service
   1. The board shall vigorously encourage all congregations in the synod to be active in Christian service in their local communities. Opportunities for such charitable work are readily found within the congregations and local agencies or institutions.
   2. A World Needs Fund has been established by the synod for this purpose and is supported by a collection taken in the synod's congregations on Mother's Day. The board shall disperse the fund according to the following guidelines:
      a. Upon request the board will consider aid for individuals or families who have suffered severe losses from situations beyond their control.
      b. In disbursing these funds the board may use the services of proper existing organizations. The board shall report to the convention the agencies through which these funds were dispersed.
      c. The board does not ordinarily render aid in individual poverty situations.

C. The board shall administer the synod's plan to encourage the congregations to establish and/or increase a pension plan for their own pastors. (see. Summary of Benefits for Called Workers)

D. The board shall administer the assistance fund for retired pastors and their widows. (see Summary of Benefits for Called Workers)

E. The board shall prepare a budget suitable for conducting its work and present it to the Planning and Coordinating Committee annually.

F. The board shall keep informed, through an individual member of the board or a subcommittee, of issues in government, law, and society which may encroach on the religious freedom or exercise of confessional freedom,

and to communicate such information to the other committees and to the synodical membership in venues open to the board.

**Article III: Retirement Contribution Plan for Pastors and Teachers of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod**

*(amended 2019 Synod Report, page 127)*
*(amended 2024 Synod Report, page 176)*

A. Eligibility
   1. This plan is intended to encourage the local congregation to provide for the future retirement of its pastors and Christian day school teachers. Synod tax sheltered annuity contributions will be remitted only to those synod congregations that have already placed money into the tax sheltered annuity plans of their workers during the previous six months. Congregational contributions must be at least similar to, and preferably larger than, the amount contributed by the synod.
   2. To be eligible, workers must be employed at least half-time on a permanent basis. No part-time workers, vacancy pastors, vicars, student teachers, substitute teachers or volunteers will be covered under this plan.
   3. For a worker to receive a pension payment during any given year, he or she must have been employed on or before November 1 of the plan's fiscal year and must have worked at least six months by April 30. Workers who change locations and begin work in a synod congregation after November 1 will be covered provided their previous position was also in the synod.
   4. Pastors and teachers of independent congregations affiliated with the synod are not eligible for payments unless the pastor or teacher is a member of the synod.

B. The synod contribution will be determined by the Board of Trustees contingent upon the availability of funds from the Marvin M. Schwan Charitable Foundation or other synod funding. (See Guidelines for the Board of Trustees, Article III.J.)

C. Administration
   1. The Board for Christian Service will serve as the Evangelical Lutheran Synod Tax Sheltered Annuity Contribution Committee.
   2. The synod treasurer will be the administrator of the contribution plan.
   3. Should the treasurer meet with challenges or conflicts that require arbitration, all arbitration is to be done by the Board for Christian Service.
   4. Administration of the Contribution Plan is in the hands of the Board for Christian Service.

**Article IV: Active Duty Military and Veterans Ministry**

*(adopted 2014 Synod Report, pages 101–102)*

A. The board shall encourage and support pastors and local congregations in efforts to bring the love of Christ to active duty military personnel, veterans of military service, and their families.

B. In support of active duty personnel, the board shall maintain a list of names and contact information of the members of ELS congregations who currently serve in any branch of our nation's military and are actively deployed in areas away from another ELS congregation or congregations of our fellowship.
   1. Names and contact information shall be submitted to the board only by the individual serving, their immediate family, or their pastor through the synod's web site.
   2. The board shall maintain regular contact with said members via email with sermons, devotional material, etc.
   3. When desired, the board shall also refer the names and contact information received to WELS Military Services to receive access to further devotional materials and printed worship services, along with other means of electronic support (email, mp3 audio devotions, etc.).
   4. It shall be understood that the board's work in this matter is meant to supplement, not replace, the work of the local pastor and congregation.
   5. When individuals no longer require this service, they will inform the board to remove their name from the active duty list.

C. Encouragement and support specifically for veterans shall take the form of the following:
   1. Establishing a clearing house of informational links regarding veterans' needs—spiritual and otherwise—on the synod's web site for veterans and their families.

2. Providing ongoing training and instruction to pastors in handling the specific counseling needs of those who have served.
3. Raising awareness about those who have served our country in our midst through various synodical publications (for example, the *Lutheran Sentinel*).

# Section 357
# Guidelines for the Committee for Communication

*(adopted 2012 Synod Report, page 136)*

**Preamble**

*(amended 2016 Synod Report, page 145)*

The advisory responsibility of the Committee for Communication will include all aspects of communications for the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

**Article I: Membership and Organization**

*(amended 2016 Synod Report, page 145)*

A. The Committee for Communication will consist of four members, two to be appointed by the president of the synod for one-year terms, and two to be elected by the synod for two-year terms; the two-year terms will be staggered. One member must be a pastor serving a congregation.

B. The committee shall annually elect a chairman and secretary at its meeting following the synod convention. The duties of the secretary are defined in General Synodical Guidelines, Article III.C.

C. The committee will meet as necessary.

**Article II: Duties and Responsibilities of the Committee and the Synod President**

*(amended 2016 Synod Report, page 145)*
*(amended 2017 Synod Report, page 149)*

A. The committee shall:
   1. Advise and assist the president of the synod on all aspects of communication.
   2. Advise the Planning and Coordinating Committee regarding certain communication needs (e.g. communication director, web expenditures, etc.).
   3. Assist the president in compiling a report for the convention. The report will be included in the President's Report.
   4. Under the president's direction, interact with the boards and committees of the synod and assist in communicating content related to the synod's strategic plan.
   5. Monitor available and emerging media technologies to determine their appropriateness and usefulness at the synodical and congregational level.
   6. Proactively provide advice on technology usage and opportunities to the boards and committees of the synod.

B. The Bethany Lutheran College Book Store will be a marketing agent for synod-produced materials.

C. The president of the synod shall appoint as editor of the *Lutheran Sentinel* an ordained member of the clergy of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod. The appointment shall be ratified by the Committee for Communication. The editor shall serve under the direction of the president. He shall be paid a stipend approved by the Board of Trustees. The removal of an editor shall be for cause and by a three-fourths majority of the voting members of the Committee for Communication. The Communication Director (see Article III.A) of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod serves under the direction of the synod president and is responsible for the oversight of the *Lutheran Sentinel*.

**Article III: Communication Director**

*(adopted 2016 Synod Report, pages 145–146)*

A. The position of communication director is a full-time called position under the direct supervision of the synod president, called by the Board of Trustees and is responsible for the communications of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod. The salary shall be set by the Board of Trustees.

B. To be qualified for this office, the communication director must be a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod clergy roster who is experienced in parish work and outreach efforts, and who has demonstrated a desire and ability to use the latest means of contemporary communication technology. He must also:
   1. Have demonstrated the ability to communicate effectively and have the respect of his colleagues.
   2. Have shown a solidly evangelical scriptural approach in his advice and practice in applying the Word of God.

C. He shall be responsible for:

1. Serving the synod president in his behalf and under his direction by assisting him in imparting to the congregations and pastors of the synod's vision and goals, and by responding publicly via media to the issues of the day with real, practical wisdom in a loving manner that strives to reach others with the gospel of Christ.
2. Together with the Committee for Communication, recommending to the synod an overall communication strategy, style manual, and preferred communication methods, including recommendations for graphic design, printing, web design/hosting, etc. These recommendations shall be made toward bringing a unified style to the synod and keeping the synod on pace with the best communication technologies.
3. Growing and developing professionally in the field of communication through continuing education (a budget for such education will be provided), establishing professional relationships with the communication staff of church entities within the fellowship of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, and making extensive use of the resources of Bethany Lutheran College.
4. Keeping in contact with the parish ministry and pastoral life by attending the General Pastoral Conference, the synod convention and local circuit meetings and conferences, and also conducting services at area churches whenever possible.

# Section 360
# Guidelines for the Synod Review Committee

### Preamble

*(adopted 2016 Synod Report, page 146)*

The committee exists to review the synod's constitution and guidelines to determine that they are consistent with the law, with internal provisions, and with existing practice.

### Article I: Membership and Organization

*(amended 2016 Synod Report, pages 146–147)*

A. The Synod Review Committee shall consist of five (5) members, three (3) to be appointed by the president of the synod for three (3) year terms, and two (2) to be elected by the synod for three (3) year terms. The president shall appoint two clergymen and one layman. The synod shall elect one clergyman and one layman.

B. After 1996, as each term of office expires, it shall be filled by appointment by the president or election by the synod.

C. The committee shall annually elect a chairman and secretary at its meeting following the synod convention. The duties of the secretary are defined in General Synodical Guidelines, Article III.C.

D. The committee shall meet as matters are assigned to it according to the provisions of Article II.A.

### Article II: Duties

*(amended 2012 Synod Report, page 147)*

A. Matters for study and consideration by the Synod Review Committee shall be assigned to it by the synod, by its Board of Trustees, or by its president.

B. The committee shall carefully review all matters assigned to it, prepare recommendations and report to each regular convention of the synod.

C. Committee responsibilities concerning amendments to various documents are included in General Synodical Guidelines, Article III.A. The committee will report each document that has received clerical corrections since the previous convention. Should the synod secretary amend the changes provided by the Synod Review Committee, he shall amend the committee report to provide consistency.

# Section 370
# Guidelines for the Planning and Coordinating Committee

*(adopted 2025 Synod Report, pages 148–151, 185–186)*

**Preamble**

The committee exists to establish and maintain a dynamic strateigic plan, establish priorities for the work of the synod and recommend a budget to carry out the work of the Lord's Kingdom. Its membership is composed of clergy and lay members with strategic planning skills, budgeting experience and a general overall knowledge of the operations of the synod.

**Article I: Membership and Organization**

A. The membership shall consist of the president, two clergy, and two laymen. The two clergy and two lay members shall be appointed by the president and approved by the Board of Trustees. Appointments are to consider the attributes of leadership, strategic planning skills and budgeting experience, and a general knowledge of the operations of the synod. The appointments are for a period of two years in staggered terms and shall be ratified at the next annual convention of the corporation. The vice-president and secretary of the synod shall serve as advisory members. The committee will be supported by advisory members consisting of synodical workers and others as appropriate.

B. The president of the synod or his designee shall serve as the chairman. The committee secretary shall be selected from among the committee members. The duties of the committee secretary are defined in General Synodical Guidelines, Article III.C.

C. The committee shall meet no less than quarterly due to the emphasis on dynamic strategic planning and monitoring of synodical strategic action plans. At least one meeting must be in-person. Meetings by electronic means are permissible at the discretion of the chairman. Special meetings may be called by the chairman or by a majority of the voting members of the committee. However, the committee shall not meet on less than two days' notice, oral or written, without the unanimous consent of the committee. A majority of members shall constitute a quorum. There shall be no proxy voting.

**Article II: Duties**

A. The committee shall engage in strategic planning for the future work of the synod by developing dynamic long-range plans.
   1. It shall solicit strategic planning input from the synod's elected boards and the institutions of the synod. It shall convene an annual meeting of the chairmen of the synod's elected boards and committees to review the strategic plan.
   2. It shall solicit strategic planning input from the synod officers and administrators and others that may have an over-arching view of the synod's needs and challenges.
   3. The Planning and Coordinating Committee shall define the amount of detail required for strategic planning, including implementation of projects and financial factors.
   4. On the basis of its evaluation, the committee shall recommend to the synod unified long-term plans for the work of the synod not limited to financial concerns.
   5. The committee shall review and update the plans and report to the synod.

B. The committee shall develop and recommend an annual budget which is aligned with the strategic plan for adoption by the convention.

**Article III: Synodical Budget Preparation**

A. Each synodical board that operates with budgeted funds shall prepare a budget request to submit to the Planning and Coordinating Committee. The treasurer will support the Planning and Coordinating Committee by providing the approved budget and expenditures for the previous and current year-to-date and the current balance of any board-specific fund balances. The budget request will include itemized requests for the next year for operating expenses, and for new projects (including assigned elements of the updated strategic plan) with cost estimates.

B. The president of the synod, treasurer, and giving counselor shall forecast the anticipated revenue from congregational offerings and donor grants in support of the overall budget development.

C. The Planning and Coordinating Committee shall review requests and prepare a budget (anticipated income and expenditures) for the following fiscal year. It shall submit its recommended budget to the synod convention.

**Article IV: Synodical Budget Adoption by the Convention**

A. The recommended budget from the Planning and Coordinating Committee will be assigned to the convention Committee on Finance. The Committee on Finance will review and submit the proposed final budget to the convention with comment. Comments may include:
   1. A recommendation to approve the budget as proposed by the Planning and Coordinating Committee.
   2. A recommendation to approve with amendments:
      a. Amendments proposed from the floor of the convention, and approved for consideration by the convention, must be submitted to the convention Committee on Finance for study before final adoption.
      b. No amendments requiring the expenditure of synod funds will be approved unless a funding source is identified.

B. The convention will consider and adopt the budget.
   1. Any synod board or division of work which concludes that its needs are not being given adequate consideration by the Planning and Coordinating Committee may appeal to the synod convention who shall order the Planning and Coordinating Committee to review the complaint and report to the following synod convention.
   2. The adopted budget will include anticipated income and anticipated expenses.

**Article V: Synodical Budget Operations**

*(see Guidelines for the Board of Trustees, Article IV)*

A. The Board of Trustees will oversee the operation of the synod budget (see Articles of Incorporation of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Article VIII; Constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Chapter V, Paragraph 1).
   1. Expenses will be paid by the synod treasurer when submitted and approved by the appropriate board and or the synod president within the funding limits established in the final budget.
   2. Expenditures for a board or office may exceed the adopted budget if funds are, or become, available in the designated year, such as:
      a. Income in excess of estimates or actual expenses.
      b. Special gifts, legacies, etc.
      c. Special circumstances that make it prudent or desirable to proceed by borrowing or otherwise funding these expenditures.
      d. Designated gifts to be used in designated areas.
      e. Sufficient fund balance for the respective board.
   3. In the event of an anticipated income shortfall and in order to prevent unwarranted deficits, the Board of Trustees may reallocate the budget approved by the convention.
      a. The Board of Trustees shall consult with the Planning and Coordinating Committee and receive a recommendation from them in preparing the reallocated budget.
      b. All boards directly affected and the Planning and Coordinating Committee shall be informed of such reallocation of the budget.

B. The synod may override a decision of the Board of Trustees to reallocate budgeted funds at the regular convention or a special convention called for that purpose.

# Section 390
# Guidelines for Church-Related Organizations

### Article I: Eligibility

To be eligible for church-related status, an organization shall be in agreement with the confession, purpose and intent of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod as stated in the synod's constitution.

### Article II: Application for Church-Related Status

An organization seeking church-related status shall submit its application to the synodical president along with a copy of its constitution and bylaws and/or documents stating its purpose and method of operation. The president shall present such application to the synod for action at its convention.

### Article III: Governance

A church-related organization shall operate under the supervision of a synodical board assigned by the synod.

A. The synodical board shall ascertain whether the organization is operating in accordance with the doctrinal position of the synod.
B. Members of the board of directors of the organization shall be chosen from within the synodical fellowship.
C. The synodical board shall receive complete financial statements and reports of operation from the organization for review, at least semi-annually.
D. The synodical board shall report to the regular conventions of the synod regarding the finances and operation of the organization.
E. The synodical board shall be responsible for depositing minutes and other documents and material with the synod archivist.

### Article IV: Support

*(amended 2012 Synod Report, page 140)*

A. A church-related organization may seek financial support from the membership of the synod. All fund-raising appeals shall be approved by and coordinated through the synod's giving counselor. (See Guidelines for the Board of Trustees, Article V.C.)
B. In the event of the dissolution of the organization, the Board of Directors in consultation with the appropriate synodical board, keeping in mind the original intent and purpose of the organization, shall determine the distribution of the assets.
C. The synod shall not be responsible for any liabilities incurred by the organization.

### Article V: Removal from Church Related Organization Status

Upon recommendation of the governing synodical board, the synod may remove for cause an institution from church-related organization status. Notice of such proposed action must be published in the *Book of Reports and Memorials* or the *Convention Handbook* prior to the convention where such determination is to be made.

# Educational Guidelines

## Section 410

# Articles of Restatement of the Articles of Incorporation of Bethany Lutheran College, Inc.

The undersigned does hereby certify that pursuant to the provisions of the Minnesota Nonprofit Corporation Act, the undersigned Secretary of Bethany Lutheran College, Inc., a Minnesota Nonprofit Corporation, whose original Articles of Incorporation were filed with the Secretary of State on August 5, 1955, in Book N-14, Page 296 under Corporate Charter Number B-306, amended document filed July 21, 1969, in Book M-32, Page 177, further amended document filed July 20, 1998, as Document Number 5790, and further amended March 7, 1990, by Document Number 1412, does hereby certify that the following resolution was adopted by the Board of Regents and approved by all members with voting rights of Bethany Lutheran College, Inc.

RESOLVED, that pursuant to the provisions of Minnesota Statute Chapter 317A, the Articles of Incorporation of Bethany Lutheran College, Inc., are hereby restated as follows:

**Restatement of Articles of Incorporation of Bethany Lutheran College, Inc.**

Article I

The name of this Corporation, and all references to the ("Corporation") which follow, shall be Bethany Lutheran College, Inc., with its registered office at 6 Browns Court, Mankato, Minnesota 56001.

Article II

The Corporation is organized on a membership basis and shall have no capital stock, nor the authority to issue such stock. The membership of the Corporation shall consist of those congregations and individuals who subscribe to the Constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod and have been accepted into membership. (see Constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Chapter II)

Article III

The purposes of the Corporation are educational, religious, social, moral and charitable. It is organized for the specific purpose of operating educational institutions for the benefit of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

The Corporation shall have the right to establish policies and curricula, employ faculty and staff, operate and maintain a physical plant, including dormitories, cafeterias and allied services and do all things needful and usual in the furtherance of its authorized purposes. It may solicit and receive contributions, grants, scholarships and endowments for the propagation of the Christian faith or in the furtherance of any authorized corporate purpose.

Article IV

The corporation does not afford pecuniary gain, incidentally or otherwise, to its members.

Article V

The corporation shall have perpetual corporate existence.

Article VI

The officers of the Corporation shall be the officers of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod as defined in the Articles of Incorporation of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Article VIII.

Article VII

A. The Corporation shall meet annually for the purpose of conducting the affairs of the Corporation, and thereby shall work to attain the purposes outlined in Chapter III of the Constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod and in Article III of the Articles of Incorporation of this Corporation, and to that end shall:
   1. Review the activities of the Corporation as conducted by its officers, boards and committees during the previous year;
   2. By careful planning and proper resolutions, arrange for the future work of the Corporation; and
   3. Elect such boards and committees, including a Board of Regents, as the Corporation may determine. Only those may serve on its boards and committees who are members of the Corporation and men of good repute. (see Bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Chapter V)

B. At such annual meeting the lay delegates of the congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod and every pastor of such congregations and such other persons as the Evangelical Lutheran Synod's constitution and bylaws may determine shall be entitled to vote. (see Articles of Incorporation of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Article VII)

Article VIII

Members of this Corporation shall not be personally liable for corporate obligations.

Article IX

The Corporation shall have no corporate seal, but the institutions may adopt and keep a seal for academic purposes.

Article X

These articles, bylaws and guidelines may be amended by vote of the members of the Bethany Lutheran College, Inc., in convention, provided that notice of each proposed amendment has been given in the *Book of Reports and Memorials* or the *Convention Handbook*. Amendments become effective upon approval by the convention and filing with the State of Minnesota.

Article XI

No Trustee shall be personally liable to the Corporation for monetary damages for a breach of fiduciary duty as a Trustee, except that the foregoing shall not eliminate or limit such Trustee's liability to the Corporation for monetary damages for the following: (1) any breach of such Trustee's duty of loyalty to the Corporation, (2) any of such Trustee's acts or omissions not in good faith or which involve intentional misconduct or a knowing violation of law, (3) acts specified in Minn. Stat. 317A.521 et seq., as it now exists or hereafter may be amended (regarding a Trustee's assent to or participation in the making of any loan by the Corporation to any Trustee or officer of the Corporation), or (4) any transaction from which such Trustee derived an improper personal benefit. If the Minnesota Nonprofit Corporation Act hereafter is amended to authorize the further elimination or limitation of the liability of Trustees, then the liability of a Trustee of the Corporation, in addition to the limitations on personal liability provided herein, shall be further eliminated or limited to the fullest extent permitted by the Minnesota Nonprofit Corporation Act. Any repeal or modification of this Article XI shall be prospective only and shall not adversely affect any right or protection of a Trustee of the Corporation existing at the time of such repeal or modification.

Dated this _____ day of _____, 2001

_____,
_____, Secretary
Bethany Lutheran College, Inc.

STATE OF MINNESOTA
SS
COUNTY OF _____

The foregoing was acknowledged before me this _____ day of _____, 2001 by _____ the Secretary of Bethany Lutheran College, Inc., a corporation under the laws of Minnesota on behalf of the corporation.

_____
Notary Public

Amended

Article VI: 2022 Synod Report, page 150

# Section 411
# Bylaws of Bethany Lutheran College, Inc.

*(adopted 2017 Synod Report, pages 150–152)*

**Preamble**

Bethany Lutheran College, Inc., a corporation owned by the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, is a corporation with the same personnel for officers and for the Board of Trustees as the Evangelical Lutheran Synod. Bethany Lutheran College, Inc. holds title to the Bethany Lutheran College property (see Report of the 97th Annual Convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod [2014], pp. 107–108, 114).

**Article I: Corporate Membership Meetings**

A. The annual meeting of Bethany Lutheran College, Inc. shall be held at such time as the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, a Minnesota corporation, holds its annual meeting. The secretary shall give written notice thereof to each congregation from which the membership of this corporation is drawn stating the time and place of the meeting, which notice may either be addressed according to the last available corporate records and mailed, not less than ten or more than thirty days before the date of said meeting, or published in an official publication of the synod which is regularly circulated to all such congregations within the sixty days of the date of the meeting.

B. The Board of Regents may request that a special meeting of the corporation be called by the president of Bethany Lutheran College, Inc. according to Chapter IV, Paragraph 3 of the Bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

C. Meetings may be held at any place specified in the notice thereof.

D. The quorum necessary to transact business at any regular or special membership meeting of the corporation shall be a majority of the voting members as defined in the Bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Chapter IV, Paragraph 2.

E. *Roberts Rules of Order* shall govern the conduct of all meetings unless modified by the Bylaws of Bethany Lutheran College, Inc. or the corporation's guidelines.

F. The right to vote in corporate affairs shall be limited to voting members as defined in Article VII.B. of the Articles of Restatement of the Articles of Incorporation of Bethany Lutheran College, Inc. Each voting member shall have one vote.

G. A member must be personally present at a meeting to validly cast his vote. Neither proxy voting nor voting by mail shall be permitted. Cumulative voting shall not be permitted.

**Article II: Board of Regents**

The Evangelical Lutheran Synod in convention elects members to the Board of Regents for the purpose of governing Bethany Lutheran College, Inc. (see Guidelines for the Evangelical Lutheran Synod Board of Regents). As its operational governing body, the board supervises the president of Bethany Lutheran College and the president of Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary and reports its work to the synod.

**Article III: Student Admissions Policy**

It is the policy of Bethany Lutheran College to admit students without restrictions for denominational or religious affiliations; nevertheless it is expected that they accept the program of required religious instruction, and conduct themselves according to biblical standards.

**Article IV: Attendance at Synodical Conventions and Conferences**

The ordained professors of the institutions of Bethany Lutheran College, Inc. are expected to be in attendance at conventions and conferences. Those not present have the responsibility of providing an excuse to the assembly through its officer. All ordained professors, whether present or not, are to be included in the equalization. Professors of a synodical institution, active or retired, shall be paid by that institution (see Guidelines for Equalization of Expenses for the Annual Convention and General Pastoral Conferences of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Article II. B. 3).

**Article V: Emeritus Titles**

The Board of Regents may grant the emeritus title to presidents and members of the faculty and staff of the institutions. (This title is not to be confused with the emeritus award conferred by the synod.)

**Article VI: Discipline**

See Guidelines for Synodical Discipline and Appeals, Article IV: Synodical Educational Institutions.

# Section 412
# Guidelines for the Evangelical Lutheran Synod Board of Regents

*(adopted 2017 Synod Report, page 152–155)*
*(see also Operational Guidelines, Guidelines for the Evangelical Lutheran Synod Board of Regents)*

**Preamble**

Bethany Lutheran College, Inc. meets concurrently with the convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, whose membership is the same as Bethany Lutheran College, Inc. The Evangelical Lutheran Synod at its annual meeting elects men from its membership to serve on the Board of Regents. The board maintains the educational institutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod for its members, upholding the doctrinal, biblical and confessional standards of the synod. The purpose of this governing board is to set policies for both Bethany Lutheran College and Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary, Mankato, Minnesota (educational institutions of Bethany Lutheran College, Inc.).

**Article I: Membership**

A. The Board of Regents shall consist of individuals elected at the regular meeting of Bethany Lutheran College, Inc. (Type A), those individuals appointed by the board and ratified by the convention (Type B), and the president of Bethany Lutheran College, Inc., (synodical president) an ex officio member.

B. The board shall consist of twelve members—nine Type A and three Type B. Type A members shall consist of not more than five nor less than three clergymen. Type B members shall consist of not more than two nor less than one clergymen.

C. Each member of the board, whether Type A or Type, B shall be a male member in good standing of the corporation according to Bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Chapter II. Upon termination of membership in said corporation, his membership on the board shall automatically cease.

**Article II: Election and Term of Office**

A. Type A members shall be elected by the voting members of the corporation of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod at an annual meeting for a term of three years.

B. Type B members shall be appointed by the board for a term of three years. Appointees shall be ratified at the next annual convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod and shall begin to serve upon such ratification. Type B nominees who are selected for ratification must be presented in the *Book of Reports and Memorials* including the same information as is required of nominated candidates for other offices. The Type B member shall be considered an advisory member of the board (without the right to vote) until the ratification. No Type B member shall serve more than two consecutive full terms as a Type B member.

**Article III: Meetings**

A. The Board of Regents shall ordinarily meet quarterly. Meetings by conference call or other technical means are allowable according to rules established by the board.

B. Special meetings may be called by the chairman of the board or the president of Bethany Lutheran College, Inc. A majority of the board shall also have the authority to call a special meeting. Each member of said majority shall record his request with both the chairman and secretary of the board. Should the chairman fail to call a meeting on the request of a majority, the secretary must call a special meeting and record the names of the regents making the request. However, the board shall not meet on less than two days' notice, oral or written, without the unanimous consent of the board.

C. A majority of the voting members of the board shall constitute a quorum.

D. The authority of the board resides only in the board as a whole. An individual board member, as such, shall have no authority to act in the affairs of the institutions except as such authority may have been specifically delegated to him by the whole board.

**Article IV: Officers of the Board of Regents and Their Duties**

A. A chairman and secretary shall be elected annually from the board's membership. Since the person in the chair must deal with matters that require theological training or experience, the chairman shall be an ordained clergyman. The board may elect other officers as it determines.

B. The chairman shall preside at meetings of the board and cause notices of these meetings to be given as herein provided. He shall have a vote in all matters before the board. He shall represent the board on ceremonial occasions. He shall sign all vouchers for the board expenses and present them to the treasurer of the college for payment.

C. Separate written reports shall be given to the convention by the Board of Regents, by the president of Bethany Lutheran College, and the president of Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary.

D. The secretary shall keep the records. He shall record all resolutions of the board and make such notes as may be pertinent to the business of the board. He shall supply copies of the minutes to the members of the board, to the officers of the corporation, and others authorized by the board. On behalf of the board, he shall prepare its report for the annual meeting of the corporation. In addition, he shall be responsible for depositing annually with the archivist of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod copies of minutes and such other material as is pertinent.

**Article V: Subcommittees**

A. The board may establish such subcommittees as needed to carry out its work, with officers and duties consistent with the board's guidelines and duties. (See General Synodical Guidelines, Article III, E.)

B. The board shall have at least one subcommittee specializing in matters concerning Bethany Lutheran College and at least one subcommittee specializing in matters concerning Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary. The subcommittees shall meet concurrently with scheduled board meetings. Subcommittee chairmen may call additional meetings as required to fulfill the duties of the board.

**Article VI: Duties**

A. The board shall govern the affairs of the institutions of Bethany Lutheran College, Inc., namely, Bethany Lutheran College and Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary (hereafter referred to as "the institutions").

B. The following, among others, shall be the duties of the Board of Regents of Bethany Lutheran College, Inc.:

1. To bear the responsibility and authority in all aspects of the institutions' operation, subject to the final authority of Bethany Lutheran College, Inc.
2. To determine the spiritual and educational needs and desires of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod with regard to the institutions and to bring to the attention of its members the problems, needs, accomplishments, and objectives of the institutions.
3. To establish the general policies for the administration and operation of the institutions.
4. To accredit all candidates for graduation from the institutions, to award degrees, and to approve seminary graduates for calls into the public ministry of the Word.
5. To appoint the presidents of the institutions as provided in the guidelines (Guidelines for Bethany Lutheran College, Article II and Guidelines for Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary, Article II, A, 1) of the respective institutions and to appoint faculty or staff members to the institutions upon the recommendation of the presidents.
6. To supervise the presidents of the institutions and, through the presidents, the professors and staff. To this end the board shall:
   a. Bolster the morale and provide for the welfare, sense of accomplishment, encouragement and inspiration for the presidents, professors, and staff, with care not to circumvent the above-mentioned chain of command.
   b. Contribute to, review and approve the goals and objectives by which the presidents judge the members of the staff, measure their accomplishments and failures, and exercise all appropriate personnel actions based on their performance.
7. To govern the management, maintenance and insurance of the physical properties of the institutions. In this connection, the board is specifically authorized to acquire from the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, by lease or otherwise, the necessary capital assets and physical plant for the operation of the institutions (see Guidelines for the Board of Trustees of Bethany Lutheran College, Inc., Article III).
8. To provide facilities and support services for the work of the institutions that are conducive to their work.

9. To provide for those auxiliary enterprises which it determines are necessary for the efficient, effective, and beneficial operation of the institutions.
10. To ensure that there is coordination of the facilities, services and administration of the seminary and the college.
11. To approve the annual budget for the operation of each institution. A summary of the budget together with a summary of the financial condition of each institution shall be presented to the synod's Planning and Coordinating Committee annually in support of each institution's request for a portion of the synodical budget.
12. To control the assets of the institutions and to secure funds for their proper operation within the limits authorized by law and by the Articles of Incorporation and the Bylaws of this corporation.
13. To fix the compensation of the institutions' presidents. Compensation ranges for other officers, faculty and staff shall be approved by the board.
14. To act as a court of appeals in all matters which are properly referred to it.

C. With respect to Bethany Lutheran College, the duties of the board shall be:
1. To provide for those auxiliary enterprises which it determines are necessary for the efficient, effective, and beneficial operation of the college, such as, but not limited to, food service, dormitories, and the Bethany Lutheran College Bookstore. The bookstore shall be a marketing agent also for publications of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (see Guidelines for the Committee for Communication, Article II, B).
2. To establish the scales of tuition, fees, requirements for admission, schedule of studies and curricula, matters of accreditation, extra-curricular activities, standards of discipline, standards and requirements for graduation, salary scales, promotions and retirements, plans for the physical development of the institutional plant, and all other matters incident to the proper operations of an institution of learning.
3. To administer special purpose funds created for the furtherance of the college program. If special funds are to be raised through the synod, refer to Guidelines for the Board of Trustees of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Article V, C.
4. To carry out the discipline of faculty and staff (see Guidelines for Synodical Discipline and Appeals, Article IV).

D. With respect to Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary, the duties of the board shall be:
1. To elect an ordained minister who is a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod to serve as president of the seminary.
2. To call other professors as necessary who are members of, or in fellowship with, the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.
3. To provide for the exchange of faculty members between the seminary and the college and coordinate such exchange on the basis of standing rules established by the board.
4. To accredit all candidates for graduation from the seminary and approve them for calls into the public ministry of the Word.
5. To establish scholarship and aid funds for the students.
6. To provide facilities for the seminary conducive to the seminary's work.
7. To provide the necessary support services.
8. To have the ultimate responsibility for the content, format and publication of the *Lutheran Synod Quarterly*.

# Section 413
# Guidelines for the Board of Trustees of Bethany Lutheran College, Inc.

*(adopted 2017 Synod Report, page 155–157)*

### Article I: Governance

*(amended 2025 Synod Report, page 185)*

The trustees shall have the general management and control of secular business and temporal affairs of said corporation. All such business and affairs they shall conduct in accordance with the Articles of Incorporation, bylaws, rules and resolutions of the synod and of Bethany Lutheran College, Inc.

### Article II: Duties

A. As custodian of corporate properties, it shall be the board's duty to hold all properties of the corporation in the name of the synod or in the name of Bethany Lutheran College, Inc., and represent the corporation in legal matters. It shall be authorized to act as the agent of the corporation in the procurement of property or the sale of property upon the recommendation of the Board of Regents and with its approval. It shall carry out the resolutions of the conventions of the synod. It shall report all such transactions to the regular conventions of the synod.

B. The Board of Trustees and/or the Board of Regents shall acknowledge receipt of all legacies in their respective annual reports to the synod.

### Article III: The Relationship Between the Board of Regents and the Board of Trustees and the Establishment of a Trustees/Regent Subcommittee

*(cf. Guidelines for the Board of Trustees of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Article X)*

#### Preamble

The Board of Trustees govern Bethany Lutheran College and Seminary with respect to the property. All other matters of trusteeship and governance are assigned to the regents.

A. The Board of Trustees, serving as the agent of the synod in financial transactions, has the responsibility and authority to make the final decision on all building projects, land purchases and those capital improvements which exceed an agreed upon and reviewable dollar amount (see C, 4 below) affecting the institutions of Bethany Lutheran College and Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary (see The Constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Chapter V, Paragraph 1; and Articles of Incorporation of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Article VIII).

B. The Board of Regents and Board of Trustees shall endeavor to hold at least one joint meeting each year for the purpose of joint planning and communication. Under unusual circumstances, during the joint Regents/Trustees meeting, the Board of Trustees may take action on a given proposal.

C. The Board of Regents and the Board of Trustees shall establish a joint subcommittee (Regents–Trustees Subcommittee). The purpose of the subcommittee is to provide a vehicle for communications between the Board of Regents and the Board of Trustees in all matters pertaining to the operation and planning for Bethany Lutheran College and Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary, especially, but not limited to, those matters involving land purchases, building projects and capital expenditures in support of the development of the institutions. The subcommittee is expected to meet on an as needed basis.

   1. The subcommittee shall consist of three members from each board, with the president of the synod and the chairman of the Board of Regents serving in an advisory capacity. It shall organize itself, including the election of a chairman and a secretary. These officers shall be elected each year. The chairman and the secretary shall not be representatives of the same board.
   2. When proposing any building project, land purchase, or capital improvement on the campus of Bethany Lutheran College or Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary, the Board of Regents shall first inform the subcommittee of its intentions. While developing proposals, the Board of Regents shall communicate with the subcommittee. The Board of Regents, together with the respective administration, shall do its own thorough planning, including the method of financing for the project.

3. The subcommittee representatives of each board shall be responsible to convey accurately information from the subcommittee to the full board. The boards' subcommittee representatives shall inform the full subcommittee of the concerns raised by their respective boards.
4. After the approval of a project/plan by the Board of Regents, the plans and the method of financing will then be submitted to the subcommittee. If the cost of the project/plan is larger than the threshold amount (periodically set by the Board of Trustees), the subcommittee shall recommend approval or disapproval of the additional expenditures. The Board of Trustees shall make the final decision.
5. Building project recommendations from the joint subcommittee to the Board of Trustees shall include the total ("all-in") cost and an updated report on the impact the new project will have on the debt load for the respective educational institution and for the synod.
6. Upon the project's approval and its implementation, should the anticipated cost of completion of the project exceed 102% of the originally approved sum of the "all-in" cost, the subcommittee is expected to make a recommendation to the Board of Trustees for further action.
7. The subcommittee shall not serve as the on-site building committee.
8. The subcommittee may prepare guidelines for its own operation which shall be approved by the Board of Trustees and the Board of Regents.

D. For the purpose of approving the above projects, it is understood that plenary sessions of the Board of Trustees (a quorum is needed) can take place via teleconferencing upon two days notice (see Guidelines for the Board of Trustees of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Article VI).

E. Once the project is approved in its final form by the Board of Regents and the Board of Trustees, implementation shall involve only the Board of Regents in conjunction with the administration of the college or seminary.

F. The Board of Regents has the sole responsibility to govern the management, maintenance and insurance of all acquired properties used by the institutions. The Board of Regents also sets the priorities for capital improvements for the institutions. It also will be responsible for including any new capital projects in its respective reports (college and seminary) to the next annual synod convention.

G. Any land or building sale proposed by the Board of Regents must be approved by the Board of Trustees (see Guidelines for the Board of Trustees of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Article III, A, 1).

# Section 414
# Guidelines for Bethany Lutheran College

*(adopted 2017 Synod Report, page 157–159)*

### Article I: Mission, Philosophy and Objectives

A. Introduction: Bethany Lutheran College is a Christian liberal arts college owned and operated by the Evangelical Lutheran Synod and committed to the teachings of the Bible as expressed in the statements of faith known as the Lutheran Confessions. The college also functions as the synod's visible center and exists to provide all appropriate services to the synod that can be expected from such a reservoir of skills and talents associated with a capable institution of higher learning.

B. Mission: Bethany Lutheran College provides Christian higher education in a challenging academic environment where personal mentoring guides students to pursue knowledge, truth, and discernment for productive and fulfilling lives.

C. Purpose: Bethany Lutheran College engages students with the saving knowledge of Christ and assists them in developing their God-given talents and abilities for meaningful lives of service in the family, church, and society. A program of study grounded in the liberal arts and taught through the discerning lens of a Christian worldview equips students with knowledge, understanding, and adaptable skills.

D. Statement of Faith: Bethany Lutheran College is a Christian liberal arts college. The college and the Evangelical Lutheran Synod are committed to the teachings of the Bible as the inerrant Word of God—the only authority for faith and life. The statements of faith known as the Lutheran Confessions are accepted as the correct understanding of the teachings of the Bible.

This commitment to the Confessions is summarized by the principles of the Lutheran Reformation: Grace Alone, Faith Alone, and Scripture Alone. Specifically, the college confesses that salvation is a free gift from God's grace alone, not dependent upon our works. We receive forgiveness for our sins through faith in Christ alone, which is produced in the individual's heart by the Holy Spirit through the Word of God and the Sacraments. Scripture alone is the standard by which all teachings and practices ultimately are evaluated.

E. Philosophy of Christian Education: The Christian faith governs the entire educational process at Bethany. Christian education implies a unique perspective on the past, present, and future, shaping a specific view of people and their relationships both to God and to others. These relationships are understood in light of the knowledge that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world, and that He is true God and Lord of the universe through time and eternity. Bethany's philosophy views knowledge and truth across the entire curriculum through the discerning lens of God's Word.

### Article II: Responsibilities of the Board of Regents

A. The Board of Regents shall elect to the presidency of the college a man who shall be a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod or of its fellowship. (If he is not already a member of the synod, he shall make application for membership as soon as possible.) He shall subscribe to the confessional standards of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, the Constitution, the Bylaws and confessional principles of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod and shall so declare at the time of his installation, and shall be elected in the following manner:

1. When the board determines that it is necessary to seek a candidate for president, it shall publish an announcement from the synodical administration in electronic or printed media that are distributed to all members of the synod the general qualifications for this office. It shall ask the congregations of the synod through its official representatives (signed by the president/chairman and secretary) to submit nominations for the office. Members of the board may nominate additional candidates. It shall announce a final date for the submission of nominees which shall be at least thirty days from its published call for nominations.
2. The names of the candidates, together with the names of those who nominate them, shall be published by the synodical administration in electronic or printed media that are distributed to all member congregations of the synod at least thirty days prior to election. Comments may be submitted to the secretary of the Board of Regents by a specific date that will be not earlier than thirty days following the distribution of the names of the nominees.

3. The board shall elect the candidate from the nominations presented (such election implies a call to a professorship in the college).
4. Approval by a three-fourths majority of the full membership of the board shall be required for election.
5. A professor serving as president or other officer of the college shall serve in that administrative capacity at the pleasure of the board. Termination of his call to the faculty shall be only for cause (see Bylaws of Bethany Lutheran College, Inc., Article VI) and by a three-fourths majority of the full board.

B. The Board of Regents shall call candidates of theology or ordained pastors, who are members of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod or are in fellowship, to teach the required religion courses and to preach in the chapel. (If he is not already a member of the synod, he shall make application for membership as soon as possible.)

C. The treasurer shall be elected as the board sees fit and shall serve as official treasurer of the college.

D. The board may establish or abolish administrative offices as it deems necessary. It shall not abolish the offices of president and of treasurer.

**Article III: Duties of Officers**

*(amended 2021 Synod Report, page 191)*

A. College President

1. He shall be the chief administrative officer. He shall, under the supervision of the board, submit a report to the annual meeting of the corporation covering the college's operation for the previous fiscal year, showing the condition of the college at the close of that fiscal year, and reporting on the affairs of the college for the current academic year.
2. He shall make sure that the goals and objectives of the college are carried out, and that the business affairs, academic affairs and other assigned affairs are in order at all times.
3. He is accountable to the board for the performance of the faculty. He shall analyze the staffing needs and the efficiency and competency of the faculty members in their assigned tasks and shall report such to the board. He shall recommend the establishment of new or amended positions. He shall analyze and make recommendations concerning candidates for positions when so directed by the board. He shall make sure that all other positions necessary for the functioning of the college are adequately staffed.
4. He shall supervise the work of the faculty and staff and shall provide the proper environment for its morale, cooperation, communication and sense of accomplishment.
5. He shall provide for the spiritual counseling and well-being of the students.
6. He shall attend meetings of the ELS Teacher Assignment Committee.
7. He is accountable for the development and upgrading of the curriculum and shall submit changes in the curriculum to the board for approval.
8. He shall communicate with other colleges in order to maintain a knowledge of the trends in college education.
9. He shall be responsible for depositing documents and other pertinent materials with the archivists of the college and the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

B. College Treasurer: The treasurer shall have the custody of all monies and securities of the college. He shall keep regular financial records. All monies of the college shall be deposited in such depositories as the board may select. In addition, the treasurer shall perform all duties which usually pertain to that office.

**Article IV: Student Admissions Policy**

It is the policy of Bethany Lutheran College to admit students without restrictions for denominational or religious affiliations; nevertheless it is expected that they accept the program of required religious instruction, and conduct themselves according to biblical standards.

# Section 415
# Guidelines for Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary

*(revised and adopted 2017 Synod Report, pages 159–164)*

**Preamble**

The seminary is committed to the Holy Scriptures as the inspired, infallible, and inerrant Word of God. The Bible is the sole authority for faith and life. The Lutheran Confessions are the correct understanding and exposition of the teaching of the Holy Scriptures. All teaching and training in the seminary, as well as approval and recommendation of graduates for the office of the public ministry of the Word, is therefore based on God's Word, with the doctrine of justification as the heart and center of the seminary's existence and work.

**Article I: Objectives**

Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary has two principle objectives:

A. To train pastors primarily for the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

1. The goals for this pastoral training are:

a. To impart to the student a thorough knowledge of the skills and disciplines of biblical study and interpretation, especially as they are related to the use of the original languages of the Bible;

b. To impart a thorough knowledge of, and an ability to work with, the systematic biblical and theological disciplines, the Lutheran Confessions and Church history;

c. To impart high standards of academic excellence in these disciplines;

d. To impart a proficiency in the use of these skills for properly distinguishing between law and gospel as well as for judging and refuting error and false doctrine;

e. Especially to impart a proficiency in the application of these disciplines to preaching, teaching, worship, theological study and pastoral care.

f. To instill in the student both the zeal and the skill

(1) to impart high standards of moral character and of personal and devotional life and prayer in his own family and in his congregation;

(2) to impart the principles of evangelical pastoral theology and counseling and methods of preaching and teaching;

(3) to serve God's people as a shepherd of the flock ("Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood." Acts 20:28, NKJV);

(4) to prepare God's people for service and the work of the ministry ("And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." Ephesians 4:11–12, NKJV);

(5) to lead his members to cooperate with fellow believers in sister congregations in the work of the church at large;

(6) to keep the Great Commission central in congregational life ("Then Jesus came and spoke to them saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.'" Matthew 28:18–20, NKJV);

(7) to impart a proper understanding and practice of the ethical and brotherly relationships and responsibilities toward the brethren in the synod with whom they have joined forces in order the better to carry out the Great Commission of our Lord.

2. To achieve these goals the Board of Regents shall provide professors to teach effectively the disciplines of research, communication, persuasion, motivation, and encouragement, both by example and proven classroom methods.

B. To serve the synod's theological needs. The seminary shall:
1. Train an adequate supply of pastors well versed in the many skills required in today's complex environment who shall be well grounded in knowledge of the Scriptures and of the Lutheran Confessions, and well skilled in the disciplines required to apply Scripture as the ultimate authority in all questions of doctrine and life;
2. Uphold the image of the public ministry among the synodical membership and the community at large, and actively to recruit young men into the seminary;
3. Function as a theological resource for the synod, and to provide services and scholarship appropriate to that function;
4. Maintain a theological library and media center adequate to the total needs of the synod.
5. Be responsible for the editing and financing of the *Lutheran Synod Quarterly*.

**Article II: Responsibilities of the Board of Regents**

*(amended 2019 Synod Report, pages 129–130)*

The Board of Regents of Bethany Lutheran College, Inc. shall be the Board of Regents of Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary. The board shall be responsible for the oversight and the administration of the seminary.

A. Faculty
1. The board shall elect an ordained minister who is a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod to serve as president of the seminary. As president he shall serve at the pleasure of the board. The president shall also be called as a professor of the seminary if he is not such already. The board is authorized to appoint an acting president when necessary.
    a. When the board determines that it is necessary to seek a candidate for president, it shall publish the general qualifications for this office. This publication shall be made through the synodical administration in electronic or printed media that is distributed to all members of the synod through its official representatives. It shall ask the congregations of the synod through its official representatives (signed by the president/chairman and secretary) to submit nominations for the office. The Board of Regents may nominate additional candidates. It shall announce a final date for the submission of nominees which shall be at least thirty days from its published call for nominations.
    b. The names of the candidates, together with the names of those who nominate them, shall be published by the synodical administration in electronic or printed media that are distributed to all member congregations of the synod at least thirty days prior to election. Comments may be submitted to the secretary of the Board of Regents by a specific date that will be not earlier than thirty days following the distribution of the names of the nominees.
    c. The board shall then elect the candidate from the nominations presented.
    d. A three-fourths majority of the full membership of the board shall be required for election.
    e. The president in his administrative capacity shall serve at the pleasure of the board. Termination of his call as professor shall be only for cause (see Bylaws of Bethany Lutheran College, Inc., Article VI) and by a three-fourths majority of the full board.
2. The board shall call other professors as necessary who are ordained members of, or in fellowship with, the Evangelical Lutheran Synod. If the one called is not already a member of the synod, he shall make application as soon as possible.
    a. When the board determines that it is necessary to seek a candidate for professor, it shall publish the general qualifications for this office as well as the field in which he primarily will instruct. This publication shall be made through the synodical administration in electronic or printed media that is distributed to all members of the synod through its official representatives. It shall ask the Voters' Assembly of the congregations of the synod to submit nominations for the office. The Board of Regents may nominate additional candidates. It shall announce a final date for the submission of nominees which shall be at least thirty days from its published call for nominations.

b. The names of the candidates, together with the names of those who nominate them, shall be published in the *Lutheran Sentinel* and in other appropriate media circulated to all the member congregations of the synod at least thirty days prior to election. Comments may be submitted to the secretary of the Board of Regents by a specified date that will be not earlier than twenty days following the distribution of the names of the nominees.

c. The board shall call the candidate from the nominees presented.

d. A majority of the full membership of the board shall be required for election.

e. The termination of any professor's call to the faculty shall be only for cause (see Bylaws of Bethany Lutheran College, Inc., Article VI) and by a three-fourths majority of the full board.

3. The board shall provide for the exchange of faculty members between the seminary and the college and coordinate such exchange on the basis of standing rules established by the board.

B. Students

1. The board shall accredit all candidates for graduation from the seminary (M.Div. and Master of Arts).

2. The board shall approve them for calls into the public ministry of the Word.

2. The board shall establish scholarship and aid funds for the students.

C. Facilities and Services

The board shall ensure that through the seminary president and Bethany Lutheran College administration adequate facilities, necessary support services, and other resources as required are available for the seminary's work.

**Article III: Seminary Administration**

A. The Seminary President

1. Qualifications

a. A man shall be chosen for this position because of a demonstrated ability in theological scholarship and leadership. He must be ordained and have served as parish pastor.

b. He should have demonstrated an administrative ability to the extent determined to be necessary for the circumstances of the seminary at the time.

c. He should have obtained an advanced degree in a theological or related discipline or should be in the process of obtaining one at the time of his call, or he shall agree at the time of his call to devote himself to the securing of an earned advanced degree. This requirement may be waived if, in the judgment of the board, the candidate possesses valid equivalent qualifications.

d. He shall subscribe to the confessional standards of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, the constitution, the bylaws and confessional principles of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod and shall so declare at the time of his installation.

2. Accountabilities and Duties of the President

a. He shall manage the affairs of the seminary as the chief administrative officer with authority over all of its affairs in compliance with the resolutions of the board. He shall, under the supervision of the board, cause reports to be submitted to the annual meeting of the corporation covering the seminary's operation for the previous fiscal year, showing the condition of the seminary at the close of the fiscal year and reporting on the affairs of the seminary for the current academic year.

b. He shall make sure that the goals and objectives of the seminary are carried out, and that the business affairs, academic affairs and other assigned affairs are in order at all times.

c. He is accountable to the Board of Regents for the performance of the faculty by analyzing the staffing needs and the efficiency and competency of the faculty members in their assigned tasks and shall report such to the board. He shall analyze and make recommendations concerning candidates for seminary positions when so directed by the board.

d. He shall make sure that all other positions necessary for the functioning of the seminary are adequately staffed.

e. He shall supervise the work of the faculty and staff and shall provide the proper environment for its morale, cooperation, communication and sense of accomplishment.

f. He shall provide for the spiritual counseling and well-being of the students.

g. He is accountable for the development and upgrading of the curriculum and shall submit changes in the curriculum to the board for approval.

h. He shall make available seminary staff to congregations of the synod in order to give information regarding seminary training, and for continued advising of ministerial candidates preparatory to their entrance into the seminary.

i. He shall communicate with other theological seminaries, especially those in fellowship with the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, in order to maintain a knowledge of theological trends and the trends in theological education. He shall advise the Doctrine Committee and the president of the synod of such communications.

j. He shall instruct one or more courses in the seminary classroom every year.

k. As president, he shall be a member of the Colloquy Committee and of the Assignment Committee.

l. As president, he shall be a member of the synod's Doctrine Committee.

m. The president shall be responsible for depositing documents and other pertinent materials with the archivist of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

B. Other Officers

1. The treasurer for the seminary shall be the treasurer of the college and shall have the custody of all monies and securities of the seminary. He shall keep regular books. All monies of the seminary shall be deposited in such depositories as the board may select. In addition, the treasurer shall perform all duties which usually pertain to that office. (see Guidelines for Bethany Lutheran College, Article III.B)

2. The board shall appoint from among the faculty any other officers deemed necessary for the efficient and orderly operation of the seminary.

**Article IV: Student Admission Policy**

It is the policy of Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary to admit students who are members of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod or of a congregation in fellowship with the ELS. Since it is the religious conviction and doctrinal position of the ELS that the Holy Scriptures do not allow women to function in the pastoral ministry, the seminary does not admit women to the M.Div. program (1 Corinthians 14:34, 1 Timothy 2:12).

**Article V: Lutheran Synod Quarterly**

A. In carrying out the following objectives, the *Lutheran Synod Quarterly* is committed to speak as the oracles of God which are revealed in the inspired Scriptures, and in accordance with the Lutheran Confessions which are a correct exposition of these inerrant Scriptures.

1. The *Lutheran Synod Quarterly* is the official journal of Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary, Mankato, Minnesota, and of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

2. It is the purpose of the *Lutheran Synod Quarterly* to give expression to the theological position of the synod and its institutions through the material that is published, and to disseminate articles of a theological nature to clergy, laity and institutions within and without the synod. To that end the *Lutheran Synod Quarterly* strives to publish material that reflects theological maturity in regard to the trends and issues of the day.

B. As the publisher of the *Lutheran Synod Quarterly*, the Board of Regents has ultimate responsibility for the content, format and publication.

C. The Editor-in-Chief shall be appointed annually by the theological faculty of Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary.

D. The Board of Regents shall be responsible for the business affairs and the distribution of the *Lutheran Synod Quarterly*.

E. The duties and responsibilities of the Editor-in-Chief:

1. Together with the faculty, he shall organize an annual plan. He shall be responsible for planning and implementing the layout.

2. He shall be responsible for soliciting and providing materials for publication.

3. He has the responsibility to reject any material which is at variance with the doctrine and accepted principles and practices of the synod, and any material which he believes to be of inferior literary value or of an untimely nature.

4. He will be responsible to the Board of Regents for the discharge of his duties and shall meet with the board at its request.

# Section 420
# Restated Articles of Incorporation of the Lutheran Schools of America, Inc.

*(adopted 2007 Synod Report, pages 114–116)*

The undersigned, being respectively the President and Secretary of the Lutheran Schools of America, Inc., a Minnesota non-profit corporation, hereby certify that at the annual meeting of the members of said Corporation, held pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 317A of the Minnesota Statutes, the following resolution was duly adopted:

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Articles of Incorporation of the Lutheran Schools of America, Inc. shall be restated in their entirety to read as follows:

**"Restated Articles of Incorporation of the Lutheran Schools of America, Inc.**

Article I

The Corporation is organized under and pursuant to the provisions of the Minnesota Nonprofit Corporation Act, being Chapter 317A of the Minnesota Statutes.

Article II

The name of this Corporation shall be the Lutheran Schools of America, Inc.

Article III

This Corporation is organized exclusively for charitable, educational, religious or scientific purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code.

Article IV

No part of the net earnings of the Corporation shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to, its members, Trustees, officers, or other private persons, except that the Corporation shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in Article III hereof. No substantial part of the activities of the Corporation shall be the carrying on of propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and the Corporation shall not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office. Notwithstanding any other provision of these Articles, the Corporation shall not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried on (a) by a corporation exempt from federal income tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or the corresponding section of any future federal tax code, or (b) by a corporation, contributions to which are deductible under Section 170(c)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code, or the corresponding section of any future federal tax code.

Article V

The duration of this Corporation shall be perpetual.

Article VI

The registered office of this Corporation shall be at 6 Browns Court, Mankato, MN 56001.

Article VII

The affairs of this Corporation shall be managed by a Board of Trustees and the manner of the election of the Trustees, together with their terms of office and number, shall be established by the bylaws. (See Bylaws for the Lutheran Schools of America, Article III.)

Article VIII

The members of this Corporation shall not be personally liable for obligations of the Corporation.

Article IX

This Corporation shall be organized on a membership basis and shall have no capital stock. The terms and other qualifications for membership shall be established by the bylaws. (See Bylaws for the Lutheran Schools of America, Article I.)

Article X

Upon dissolution of the Corporation, the assets shall be distributed for one or more exempt purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or the corresponding section of any future federal tax code, or shall be distributed to the federal government, or to a state or local government, for a public purpose.

Article XI

No Trustee shall be personally liable to the Corporation for monetary damages for a breach of fiduciary duty as a Trustee, except that the foregoing shall not eliminate or limit such Trustee's liability to the Corporation for monetary damages for the following: (1) any breach of such Trustee's duty of loyalty to the Corporation, (2) any such Trustee's acts or omissions not in good faith or which involve intentional misconduct or a knowing violation of law, (3) acts specified in Minn. Stat. 317A.521 et seq., as it now exists or hereafter may be amended (regarding a Trustee's assent to or participation in the making of any loan by the Corporation to any Trustee or officer of the Corporation), or (4) any transaction from which such Trustee derived an improper personal benefit. If the Minnesota Nonprofit Corporation Act hereafter is amended to authorize the further elimination or limitation of the liability of Trustees, then the liability of a Trustee of the Corporation, in addition to the limitations on personal liability provided herein, shall be further eliminated or limited to the fullest extent permitted by the Minnesota Nonprofit Corporation Act. Any repeal or modification of this Article XI shall be prospective only and not adversely affect any right or protection of a Trustee of the Corporation existing at the time of such repeal or modification.

Article XII

This Corporation shall not afford pecuniary gain, incidentally or otherwise, to its members."

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the undersigned have hereunto set their hands this 22nd day of August, 2007.

John A. Moldstad, President
Craig A. Ferkenstad, Secretary

# Section 421
# Bylaws of the Lutheran Schools of America

*(adopted as Guidelines, 2006 Synod Report, page 127)*
*(adopted with changes as Bylaws, 2007 Synod Report, page 117)*
*(amended 2015 Synod Report, page 118)*

### Article I: Membership of the Corporation

The membership of this corporation shall consist of those congregations and individuals who subscribe to the Constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod and have been accepted into membership of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod. (See Constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Chapter II.)

### Article II: Organization

A. The annual meeting of Lutheran Schools of America, Inc. shall be held at such time as the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, a Minnesota corporation, holds its annual meeting. The secretary shall give written notice thereof to each congregation from which the membership of this corporation is drawn stating the time and place of the meeting, which notice may either be addressed according to the last available corporate records and mailed, not less than ten or more than thirty days before the date of said meeting, or published in an official publication of the synod which is regularly circulated to all such congregations within sixty days of the date of the meeting.

B. The Board for Lutheran Schools may request that a special meeting of the corporation be called by the president of the Lutheran Schools of America, Inc. according to Bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Chapter IV, Paragraph 3.

C. Meetings may be held at any place specified in the notice thereof.

D. The quorum necessary to transact business at any regular or special membership meeting of the corporation shall be a majority of the voting members as defined in the Bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Chapter IV, Paragraph 2.

E. *Roberts' Rules of Order* shall govern the conduct of all meetings unless modified by these bylaws or the Guidelines for the Board for Lutheran Schools.

F. The right to vote in the affairs of this corporation shall be limited to voting members as defined in Article I. Each voting member shall have one vote.

G. A member must be personally present at a meeting to validly cast his vote. Neither proxy voting nor voting by mail shall be permitted. Cumulative voting shall not be permitted.

### Article III: Board of Trustees of the Corporation

Between meetings of the corporate membership, the general management and control of this corporation shall be vested in a board of nine (9) trustees, two (2) of whom shall be the president and secretary elected at the corporation's annual meeting. The president and secretary shall be elected for a term of four (4) years. The remaining seven (7) trustees shall each be elected for three (3) year terms. Officers and trustees shall be elected as their terms expire. At the same time that the president is elected, a vice president shall be elected for a four (4) year term. There shall not at any time be more than five or less than three clergy on the Board of Trustees. (See Articles of Incorporation of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Article VIII.) For day-by-day operational purposes, the synod's Board for Lutheran Schools shall manage and direct the affairs of Lutheran Schools of America, Inc., reporting to the synod's corporate meetings.

### Article IV: Administration of the Lutheran Schools of America Fund

A. Income of the Lutheran Schools of America, Inc.
   1. The "For You and Your Children" offering and its deferred gifts shall be a fund for operational and/or endowment purposes (see Bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod Foundation, Article VII).
   2. The income of LSA shall be deposited in a special fund of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.
   3. The Board of Trustees of the Lutheran Schools of America, Inc. shall report the amount of funds available to the Board for Lutheran Schools every November (see Guidelines for the Board of Trustees, Article XII.B).

B. Disbursements of the Lutheran Schools of America, Inc.
   1. Those who may be considered as recipients of this fund are:

a. Established congregations starting new Lutheran early childhood programs or elementary schools.
b. Mission congregations which the board in conjunction with the Board for Home Outreach desires to begin schools.

2. The Board for Lutheran Schools shall determine the eligibility of the requesting party for the use of these funds in order to disburse the funds made available each year, and will recommend to the Board of Trustees of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod disbursement of the capital fund for loans.
3. All loans from the LSA fund shall be negotiated with the Board of Trustees of Lutheran Schools of America, Inc. with the understanding that loans shall be made in accordance with the synod guidelines entitled "Loans from the Synod for Home Outreach Projects" (see Guidelines for the Board of Trustees of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Article VIII and Article XII.A.; Guidelines for the Board for Home Outreach, Article VI).
4. The Board of Trustees of Lutheran Schools of America, Inc. will hold ownership in the name of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of any property that may be acquired for the purposes of the Board for Lutheran Schools until such time as the property is transferred to a local congregation (see Guidelines for the Board of Trustees of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Article III.A.1).

# Section 422
# Guidelines for the Board for Lutheran Schools

*(adopted 2015 Synod Report, page 119)*
*(amended 2018 Synod Report, pages 160–161)*

**Preamble**

In 2006 the Evangelical Lutheran Synod established and incorporated Lutheran Schools of America, Inc. (*Synod Report*, 2006, Resolution 2, pp. 127, 147–156). This organization exists to promote classical Christian education, to support the opening of new schools, and to assist congregations in their education programs. (See Restated Articles of Incorporation of the Lutheran Schools of America, Inc. and Bylaws of the Lutheran Schools of America). In 2015, the synod established a Board for Lutheran Schools (*Synod Report*, 2015, Resolution 4, p. 128) to promote Christian education in the synod's schools and to administer its educational work.

Both the traditional model and the classical model of Christian education have as primary goals that each student grow in the knowledge and faith of their Lord and Savior through teaching the Scriptures and training them in the use of that knowledge. The Board for Lutheran Schools assists the synod's schools in implementing these goals.

All monies given for Christian education to the synod (Lutheran Schools of America, Inc., or otherwise) shall be used for the support of Lutheran schools in the synod.

**Article I: Policy**

Honoring the Lord's direction to "Feed My lambs" (John 21:15) and His specific direction concerning the instruction of young people, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them, for of such is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 19:14), the Evangelical Lutheran Synod promotes Christian education to give young people a knowledge of God's Word in addition to teaching secular subjects. The synod's Christian schools exist to promote the mission of the Christian Church through providing well-trained youth. These Lutheran schools must teach the certainty of salvation through the life, death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ because "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge" (Proverbs 1:7). (See further, Article II.)

**Article II: Objectives**

*(amended 2018 Synod Report, page 160)*

The objectives of the Board for Lutheran Schools are:

A. To promote the cause of Christian education for the glory of God's kingdom, for the welfare of the synod's congregations and for the nation.

B. To assist parents with their God-given vocation through nurturing the spiritual, intellectual, social, and physical growth of their children in Christian schools.

C. To work toward establishing Christian schools of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod that are characterized by a faithful adherence to the Scriptures, by requiring academic excellence, by expecting high student achievement, and by doing community service work.

D. To promote Lutheran early learning centers, preschools, elementary schools and secondary schools throughout the country, in conjunction with existing congregations or in exploratory mission sites. To this end, the board will:

   1. Advise and assist the congregations of the synod in early childhood, elementary and secondary education, and do so in cooperation with the coordinator of education of Bethany Lutheran College.
   2. Provide leadership education for teachers, pastors, officers and workers in the parish.
   3. Plan a budget so that the work of the board can be adequately carried out and properly financed, including all current programs with allocations for early childhood and elementary education. The draft budget will be forwarded to the Planning and Coordinating Committee for consideration within the General Fund Budget of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.
   4. Make arrangements with the president of the synod to provide periodically for essays and/or for other suitable material on early childhood, elementary and secondary education at the annual conventions of the synod.

**Article III: Members of the Board**

A. Members of the board shall be male members of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, and who:
   1. Exhibit a continued interest in promoting Christian education and Lutheran Schools, or
   2. Have served as a member of his congregation's board for education or have (had) children in a synod Lutheran school, or
   3. Have professional training or expertise in the area of Christian education that would enable the board to carry out its work.

B. The voting members will consist of the nine men elected according to these guidelines. Three will be clergymen, two will be male teachers in ELS schools, three will be laymen and one may represent any of those categories. Those serving as teacher representatives must have successfully completed the Evangelical Lutheran Synod Teacher Certification requirements (see Article VII). All terms will be for three years, unless otherwise directed in these guidelines.

C. The board may suggest to the Committee on Nominations names for all open positions on the board. In proposing nominees, the board will give strong consideration to qualifications and to regional representation from throughout the synod.

D. Because of their relationship to the responsibilities of the board, the following shall serve in an advisory capacity to the board (non-voting):
   1. The coordinator of education of Bethany Lutheran College.
   2. The treasurer of the synod.

E. The board shall annually elect its own officers.

F. Elected or advisory members of the board may be removed from office according to the provisions in General Synodical Guidelines, Article III.D.

**Article IV: Duties of the Board for Lutheran Schools**

The Board for Lutheran Schools:

A. Shall develop the general synodical education policies.

B. Shall assist with locating and coordinating financing for Lutheran early childhood programs and elementary schools and lend counsel in the administration of such.

C. Has the responsibility to prepare guidelines for the board itself, for its officers and for its meetings.

D. Shall provide a definition of and standards for synodical schools. It shall seek to serve the welfare of, and be an advising board for, all the schools in the synod.

E. Shall provide policies for the administration of the synod certification program and for the use of the Lutheran elementary school funds and any budgeted funds from the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

F. Shall report to each regular convention of the synod.

G. Shall keep itself informed, through an individual member of the board or a subcommittee, of issues in government, law, and society which may encroach on the religious freedom or exercise of confessional freedom, and to communicate such information to the schools under the board's authority.

H. Shall establish calling procedures. (See Guidelines When There is a Pastor or Teacher Vacancy in a Congregation, Article II.)

I. Shall assist teachers in becoming familiar with both the traditional and the classical models of Christian education.

**Article V: Officers of the Board and Their Duties**

*(amended 2018 Synod Report, page 160)*
*(amended 2021 Synod Report, page 191)*

A. The board shall elect a chairman from its members who shall conduct meetings and establish the agenda. The chairman shall perform such other duties as the board may direct.

B. The vice chairman of the board shall serve as chairman in case of necessity and have other such duties as the board or these guidelines may require.

C. The duties of the recording secretary are defined in General Synod Guidelines, Article III.C.

D. The board shall select a member or advisory member to serve as the ELS Secretary for Schools who shall:
   1. Assist congregations in the promotion and advancement of Christian early childhood, elementary, and secondary education.
   2. Encourage the youth to attend one of the Lutheran high schools of our fellowship.

3. Receive subsidy requests from Lutheran early childhood programs and elementary schools for presentation to the board.
4. Prepare reports on the progress and condition of all schools of the synod.
5. Be available for counseling with existing schools on such matters as school administration, curriculum, teaching materials, placement of teachers, and government legislation affecting the church and youth.
6. Receive and process applications for ELS teacher certification.
7. Attend workshops and/or courses to keep informed and well prepared.
8. Attend the meetings of the ELS Teacher Assignment Committee, except when there is a conflict of interest (see Guidelines for Assignment Committees, Article II.A).

**Article VI: Meetings**

The board shall meet at least twice per year at least one of which must be a face-to-face meeting. Meetings by electronic means are permissible according to rules established by the board. Special meetings may be called by the chairman or by a majority of the voting members of the board. However, the board shall not meet on less than two days' notice, oral or written, without the unanimous consent of the board. A majority of the voting members of the board shall constitute a quorum. There shall be no proxy voting.

**Article VII: Certification Rules for Teachers of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod**

*(amended 2018 Synod Report, page 160)*

A. In order for the board to certify a teacher, the candidate must demonstrate that he/she
   1. Is apt to teach.
   2. Is trained and willing to teach religion in accord with the Holy Scriptures and the confession and constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod. (See Evangelical Lutheran Synod Constitution, Paragraph 2 and Paragraph 3.)
   3. Has successfully completed the Evangelical Lutheran Synod Teacher Certification requirements with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Education at Bethany Lutheran College or the teacher education program at Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minnesota.
   4. As a graduate of an institution other than Bethany Lutheran College or Martin Luther College, has completed the following steps:
      a. Submission of an application for teacher certification to the ELS Secretary for Schools that includes copies of transcripts.
      b. Completion of a successful evaluation by the board. This evaluation will include an examination to determine whether the applicant is in doctrinal agreement with the Holy Scriptures and the confession and constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, whether the candidate has completed required courses that are related specifically to Christian education, and to determine the applicant's philosophy of education.

B. The board shall establish standards for the evaluation of applications for certification.

**Article VIII: Jurisdiction and Procedures for the BLC Education Program and the Board for Lutheran Schools**

*(adopted 2021 Synod Report, page 190)*

The Bethany Lutheran College Education program involves training teachers for both public and private school teaching. The following guidelines are developed to maintain fraternal relations with the boards, congregations and synods of our fellowship and to promote the need for all communication to go through the proper channels for good order.

A. Jurisdiction
   1. The jurisdiction for assisting education graduates intending to serve in ELS schools primarily rests with the ELS Secretary for Schools and the ELS Teacher Assignment Committee (See Guidelines for Assignment Committees, Article II).
   2. The jurisdiction for assisting education graduates not intending to serve in ELS schools rests solely with Bethany Lutheran College.
   3. The jurisdiction for congregations of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod who request teacher candidates from the Bethany Lutheran College Education Department rests with the WELS Commission on Lutheran Schools.

B. Procedures relating to the ELS
   1. When a teacher candidate signs a declaration of intent at a date to be determined by the Board for Lutheran Schools to be assigned to an ELS school, and has fulfilled the synod's certification program, the ELS Secretary for Schools must be notified.
   2. The ELS Secretary for Schools will then inform as soon as possible those ELS congregations which have teaching vacancies about the availability of teacher candidates for placement.
   3. Congregations must transmit their call for a teacher through the ELS Secretary for Schools by a date to be determined by the Board for Lutheran Schools (See Guidelines for Assignment Committees, Article II).

C. Procedures relating to the WELS
   1. Since ELS Certification is also recognized as fulfilling the requirements for a call into WELS schools, if a student is eligible and desires to serve in a WELS school, the BLC Coordinator of Education shall inform the ELS Secretary for Schools. The ELS Secretary for Schools will inform the Director of WELS Commission on Lutheran Schools of the availability of a teacher candidate for a call.
   2. In order that the requirements and standards of WELS not be circumvented, WELS congregations or schools who contact Bethany Lutheran College regarding a teacher candidate must be informed that they need to work through the WELS Commission on Lutheran Schools, and/or through their district representative.

**Article IX: Budget Preparation, Adoption and Review**

A. The Board for Lutheran Schools shall prepare an annual budget for review and adoption by the board. The budget shall be included in the general fund budget of the synod.

B. The treasurer of the synod shall provide the Planning and Coordinating Committee with a financial report that will show the revenues and their sources and expenditures for the year.

## Section 510
# Circuit Divisions in the Evangelical Lutheran Synod

Circuit No. 1
- Florida
  - Kissimmee, Peace
  - Lakeland, Our Savior
  - Lakeland, Peace
  - Naples, Our Savior
  - Port St. Lucie, Christ
  - Sebring, New Life
  - Vero Beach, Grace
  - Winter Haven, Resurrection

Circuit No. 2
- Massachusetts
  - Brewster, Trinity
  - Burlington, Pinewood

Circuit No. 3
- Michigan
  - Frankenmuth, St. John's
  - Hillman, Faith
  - Holland, Lord of Life
  - Holton, Holton
  - Midland, Holy Scripture
  - Rogers City, Trinity
  - Saginaw, Gloria Dei
  - Suttons Bay, First
- Ohio
  - Bowling Green, Abiding Word
  - Deshler, Peace
- Pennsylvania
  - Irwin, Zion

Circuit No. 4
- Illinois
  - Lombard, St. Timothy
- Indiana
  - Hobart, Grace
- Wisconsin
  - Cottage Grove, Abiding Shepherd
  - Cottage Grove, Western Koshkonong
  - Madison, Grace
  - Madison, Holy Cross
  - Madison, Our Saviour's
  - Oconomowoc, Holy Trinity
  - Oregon, Faith
  - West Bend, Trinity

Circuit No. 5
- Wisconsin
  - Bloomer, Good Shepherd
  - Elderon, Our Savior's
  - Green Bay, Christ the King
  - Iola, Redeemer
  - Marinette, First Trinity

- Omro, Messiah
- Portage, St. Paul's
- Shawano, St. Martin
- Wausau, Zion
- Wisconsin Dells, Newport

Circuit No. 6
- Minnesota
  - Audubon, Immanuel
  - Bagley, Our Savior's
  - Crookston, Grace
  - East Grand Forks, River Heights
  - Lengby, St. Paul
  - Oklee, Oak Park
  - Trail, Mt. Olive
  - Trail, Nazareth
  - Ulen, Calvary

Circuit No. 7
- Minnesota
  - Apple Valley, Heritage
  - Cold Spring, Gloria Dei
  - Farmington, Hope
  - Golden Valley, King of Grace
  - Princeton, Bethany
  - Princeton, Our Savior's
  - Rogers, Redeeming Grace
- Wisconsin
  - Eau Claire, Ascension
  - Eau Claire, Concordia
  - Eau Claire, Pinehurst
  - Menomonie, St. Katherine's

Circuit No. 8
- Minnesota
  - Belview, Our Savior's
  - Belview, Rock Dell
  - Clara City, Faith
  - Cottonwood, English
  - Eagle Lake, Eagle Lake
  - Gaylord, Norwegian Grove
  - Luverne, Bethany
  - Mankato, Mt. Olive
  - North Mankato, Peace
  - St. Peter, Norseland
  - Tracy, Zion

Circuit No. 9
- Iowa
  - Ames, Bethany
  - Calmar, Trinity
  - Charles City, Cross
  - Forest City, Forest
  - Indianola, Good Shepherd
  - Lake Mills, Grace
  - Lawler, Saude
  - New Hampton, Jerico
  - New Hampton, Redeemer

Northwood, First Shell Rock
Parkersburg, Faith
Scarville, Center
Scarville, Scarville Synod
Thompson, Zion
Thornton, Richland
Waterloo, Pilgrim
Waukon, King of Grace
Minnesota
Albert Lea, Our Savior's
Hartland, Hartland
Manchester, Manchester
Circuit No. 10
Missouri
Cape Girardeau, Scriptural
Carthage, Faith
Jefferson City, Peace
Texas
Leander, Hope
San Angelo, Living Water
San Antonio, Faith
Weatherford, Divine Mercy
Circuit No. 11
Arizona
Lake Havasu City, Our Saviour
Scottsdale, Redeemer
California
Irvine, Faith
Windsor, Christ
Utah
West Jordan, Hope
Circuit No. 12
Oregon
Grants Pass, Our Savior
Gresham, Saved by Grace
Hillsboro, Reformation
Hood River, Concordia
Klamath Falls, Christ
Medford, Faith
North Bend, Resurrection
Redmond, Grace
Saint Helens, Ascension
Sutherlin, Christ
The Dalles, Bethany
Washington
Lakewood, Lakewood
Mt. Vernon, St. Luke
Port Orchard, Bethany
Tacoma, Parkland

# List of Definitions

*(Note: The definitions given below are provided by the Synod Review Committee to identify and describe terms as they are used in the Synod Handbook. These definitions have not been approved by any synod convention are not legally binding.)*

**Ad hoc**: Latin, literally meaning "for this." An *ad hoc* committee is established with a narrow scope and time frame, for the purpose of dealing with one specific issue or set of issues.

**Administrator**: Someone who manages the operation of a business, organization, or plan.

**Advisory**: Someone from within the synod who assists and advises a board or committee in its work, but is unelected and therefore cannot participate in the official actions of the board or committee they serve. An advisory member of a board or committee is eligible to speak, but does not have a vote.

**All-in:** [adjective] With everything included.

**Articles of Incorporation:** The document generally states the legal basis for the existence of a congregation or a legal body, including the state or other governmental entity where the official articles are recorded, such as Minnesota and Wisconsin. Generally this information is intended for those persons who are not members of the corporation but who have relationships with the corporation.

**Board**: A small deliberative body subordinate to the synod, established to operate with the authority granted by the synod, with its membership, duties, and number and manner of meetings defined by the synod. See "Committee."

**Bylaws:** A further development or expansion of the general information provided in the constitution. The process for amending bylaws is described in Article VIII. See "Guidelines."

**Church-related**: Official organizations of the synod that support church work and are supervised by a board of the synod.

**Circuit:** A circuit is a geographical area of the synod containing a number of congregations. In the circuits the pastors may meet together for conferences and the congregations may have annual circuit meetings. The circuits of the ELS are not governing, administrative units similar to districts in other synodical organizations.

**Circuit visitor:** The synod convention elects a visitor and alternate for each circuit of the synod. The visitors, acting on behalf of the president, assist congregations in calling new pastors; assist and counsel the pastors as needed; conduct visitations in the congregations as invited, to help the pastor and congregation in a self-evaluation. In some instances, the visitors are involved in discipline cases.

**Clergy:** The Constitution, Bylaws, and Guidelines of the ELS ordinarily use the term clergy to include all ordained men in good standing holding membership in the synod, serving member or non-member congregations; synodical educational institutions; home or foreign missions; synodical officers or staff members; retired pastors (emeriti); or those who are temporarily without a call but members in good standing of the synod. When the term "pastor" is used, it ordinarily means one who is serving a congregation.

**Committee:** A small, deliberative body subordinate to the synod, established by the synod to carry out the work assigned to it by the synod and the synod president. While the synod can establish committees, the synod president can also establish committees on an *ad hoc* basis. See "Board."

**Congregation**: Confessing believers who are regularly gathered in one location around Word and Sacraments; often an incorporated entity.

**Constitution:** A written instrument embodying the rules of an organization. The Constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Inc., defines the corporation to the members of the synod. It is a document aimed internally to the synod's membership in contrast to the Articles of Incorporation that are aimed externally. The process for amending the constitution is described in Article VII.

**Consultant:** Someone who may be from outside the synod or outside the board or committee involved, who is invited by a board or committee to give expert advice, assistance, and make recommendations to a board or committee in his/her area of expertise, but is not eligible to vote. The consultant may be paid by the board or committee, such as an architect, engineer, or financial advisor; may be paid by another agency; or may be an unpaid volunteer. The consultant is permitted to speak in the meetings about the field for which one was appointed, or on other matters as the chairman permits. See "Advisory."

**Corporation:** A body formed and authorized by law to act as a single person although constituted by one or more persons and legally endowed with various rights and duties including the capacity of succession. The Evangelical Lutheran Synod is legally registered in the State of Minnesota as the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Incorporated. Owned by the Evangelical Lutheran Synod are five other legally documented bodies: the Wisconsin corporation, the

Evangelical Lutheran Synod Foundation, the Missions Advancement Project, Inc., Bethany Lutheran College, Inc. and the Lutheran Schools of America, Inc.

**Counselor:** A person whose job is to provide advice, help, or encouragement.

**Duties:** Actions or tasks required of officials, boards, or committees by the guidelines.

**Emeritus:** An honorary title conferred by a governing body to indicate the completion of an office in the synod. The titles are president emeritus, pastor emeritus, and professor emeritus (fem.-emerita, plural-emeriti).

**Ex officio member:** Latin, literally meaning "by virtue of the office." One who, as part of his official duties, serves on a board or committee. An *ex officio* member of a board or committee has all the privileges, including the right to vote, but none of the obligations of board or committee membership. For example, the synod president is an *ex officio* member of the Bethany Lutheran College, Inc., Board of Regents. (See Roberts Rules of Order, 10th edition, chapter XVI, paragraph 49, p. 466).

**Field Coordinator:** Someone who has responsibility over a region of world missions.

**For Cause**: When an action is taken "for cause," it means that substantiated charges have been brought against an individual for holding to false doctrine, living a life contrary to Scripture, or the inability to carry out his official duties. Note: actions or suspensions of the synod are not excommunications and do not require unanimity where votes are required.

**Goal:** The result toward which an effort is directed.

**Govern:** To set policies and oversee the work of administration. See "Maintain."

**Guideline:** A statement or outline of policy or conduct, describing the function or mission of various activities and of the boards and committees of the synod. When appropriate they may include membership, terms of office of members, and responsibilities concerned with the function of the board or committee.

**Incorporate:** "To form into a legal corporation" under state law.

**Layman:** All male voting members of the congregations of the ELS, including male teachers, are laymen for the purpose of the synodical organization and its various offices and committees. Retired pastors or pastors who are without a call do not serve in board and committee positions designated for laymen.

**Maintain or Manage:** To direct from day to day the activities of the institutions. See "Govern."

**Officer:**

1) **Executive officer:** Those who hold an elected office in the corporation; the president, vice president, and secretary of the synod.
2) **Board officer:** Those selected to positions of authority on a board or committee, i.e., chairman and secretary.

**Responsibilities:** An accountable obligation established by the guidelines. See "Duties."

**Staff:** Personnel employed by the synod and/or its boards and committees some of whom have divine calls to serve in their positions, others of whom are hired. Those staff members who are ordained and preaching as part of their responsibilities receive divine calls.

**Sub-Committee:** Appointed by a board or committee for specific tasks, with limited personnel and meeting times, that reports to the board or committee.

**Synod:** Greek, meaning "a walk together" implying a unity of faith. An ecclesiastical governing or advisory council or body. As referred to in the Handbook of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Inc., it is the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

**Winkel:** Often a "corner" or small area of a circuit. Sometimes "winkel conferences" may include all the pastors in a particular circuit.

**Abbreviations used in the Handbook:**

**BHO** = Board for Home Outreach
**BWO** = Board for World Outreach
**BYO** = Board for Youth Outreach
**Inc.** = Generally used in a title as an abbreviation for a legally incorporated entity or institution
**LSA** = Lutheran Schools of America
**MAP** = Missions Advanced Project
**M.Div.** = Master of Divinity
**P.em.** = Pastor emeritus