

**MEMORANDUM REGARDING PROPOSED UPDATES TO THE
BETHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH
CONSTITUTION, BYLAWS, AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS
(Proposals for Consideration at Annual Meeting on February 2, 2025)**

Proposals to amend and update the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of Bethany Lutheran Church at the 2025 annual meeting of the congregation come from two sources; and all of these proposals are contained in the red-lined version completed and distributed in December 2024 with this Memorandum. These proposed amendments have been endorsed by the Congregation Council and submitted for approval at the annual meeting of the congregation scheduled for Sunday, February 2. This memo is intended to briefly describe the sources of the proposed amendments.

Most of the proposed edits/updates are based on amendments adopted by the ELCA Churchwide Assemblies in 2019 and 2022. Customarily, Churchwide Assemblies enact amendments to the *Model Constitution for Congregations*, which congregations then review and enact. However, amendments adopted by Churchwide Assemblies in 2019 and 2022 have not yet been incorporated into Bethany's governing documents. Most of the red-lined edits/updates are based on bringing Bethany's governing documents up-to-date. The *Model Constitution for Congregations*, as well as an introduction and explanation by the ELCA Secretary regarding the interface between constitutions of the churchwide organization, synods, and congregations, are available for review on the ELCA website at this link: [Constitutions](#). In accordance with Bethany constitutional provisions *C16.04, *C17.02, and *C18.02, all such proposed amendments probably can be adopted at a single congregational meeting!

In addition to incorporating updates/edits based upon the *Model Constitution for Congregations*, the Bethany Congregation Council has considered and is proposing, a number of additional amendments. They are as follows:

- Adding continuing resolution C5.05A25 providing for operating policies and procedures of the Mission Endowment Fund, which was previously created under constitutional provision C5.05.
- Adding continuing resolution C13.03A25 describing the policies and procedures for the Audit Committee, which was previously created under constitutional provision C13.03.

- Changing existing constitutional provision C13.04 regarding a Human Resources Committee into a continuing resolution in C13.06A25. This will allow the Council to ascertain if this Committee is necessary and, if so, what its policies and procedures should be. (Continuing resolutions can be created, eliminated, or edited by the Congregation Council without the need for a congregational meeting.)
- Adding a new constitutional provision C13.04 to provide for a Mutual Ministry Committee in conformance with the *Model Constitution for Congregations*. (Such a committee allows for informal and confidential communications between a rostered leader and congregational leaders.)
- Adding continuing resolution C13.07A25, requiring that duties and responsibilities of committees, task forces, and other organizational units be described when they are created, and also requiring that these bodies make reports to the annual meeting.
- Changing the quorum requirement in C10.04 to conform with the recommended provision in the *Model Constitution for Congregations* by providing a percentage determination of quorum (20% of voting members) instead of a specific number (currently 50 voting members).

In addition to substantive amendments, Bethany has been advised that some of its existing numbering of continuing resolution provisions is inconsistent with ELCA recommendations. Therefore, the numbering of continuing resolutions in Chapters 12 and 13 has been modified to conform with those recommendations.

All governing document amendments adopted by a congregation must be provided to the synod. Preliminary discussion with the Northwest Washington Synod indicates that Bethany's proposals are in order.

In anticipation of the annual meeting, please review the proposed governing document amendments. (In doing so, note that provisions that have an asterisk before the number (*) are mandatory for inclusion and must conform to the *Model Constitution for Congregations*.) If you have any questions, please email the church office, and arrangements will be made to respond to you before the annual meeting.