

# 1997 AMENDMENTS TO THE MODEL CONSTITUTION FOR CONGREGATIONS

*as approved by the 1997 Churchwide Assembly  
of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania • August 14-20, 1997*

Prepared by the Office of the Secretary  
of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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## **Additions are underlined. Deletions are ~~struck through~~ in the text.**

*To amend \*C7.04. and \*C17.02. in the Model Constitution for Congregations to specify the requirement for such meetings:*

**\*C7.04.** If a two-thirds majority of the voting members of this congregation present at a ~~regularly~~ legally called... *[with the remainder of the provision unchanged].*

**\*C17.02.a.** A proposed amendment to this constitution shall:

- a. Be approved at a ~~properly~~ legally called meeting... *[with the remainder of the provision unchanged].*

*To amend \*C9.12. in the Model Constitution for Congregations to clarify the meaning of the provision:*

**\*C9.12.** The pastor of this congregation:

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

*To add the following language at the beginning of C12.01. in the Model Constitution for Congregations to provide the option of either a specific number or a maximum number for definition of the membership of the Congregation Council:*

**C12.01.** The voting membership of the Congregation Council shall consist of the pastor(s), the officers of the congregation, and [ \_\_\_ members ] [not more than \_\_\_ members] of the congregation... *[with the remainder of the provision unchanged except as indicated below].*

*To add the following language at the end of C12.01. in the Model Constitution for Congregations:*

**C12.01.** Consistent with the laws of the state in which the congregation is incorporated, the congregation may adopt procedures for the removal of a member of the Congregation Council in other circumstances.

*To amend C12.04.h. in the Model Constitution for Congregations to correct the reference in regard to the churchwide organization:*

**C12.04.h.** To emphasize partnership with the synod and churchwide ~~units~~ organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America... *[with the remainder of the provision unchanged].*

*To add the following language at the end of \*C15.01. in the Model Constitution for Congregations:*

**\*C15.01.** If for any reason, the pastor is unable to administer the admonitions required by a. and b. hereof, the president (if not the pastor) or vice president shall administer such admonitions.

To amend \*C15.02. in the Model Constitution for Congregations to clarify the intended meaning:

**\*C15.02.** [First sentence unchanged.] . . . A member charged with the offense shall appear before the Congregation Council after having received a written notice, at least 10 days prior to the meeting, specifying the exact charges that have been made against the member, at least 10 days prior to the meeting.

To add a new chapter on indemnification to the Model Constitution for Congregations and to list Chapter 19 in churchwide constitutional provision 9.25. as a required section of the Model Constitution for Congregations:

**Chapter 19.**  
**INDEMNIFICATION**

**\*C19.01.** Consistent with the provisions of the laws under which this congregation is incorporated, this congregation may adopt provisions providing indemnification for each person who, by reason of the fact that such person is or was a Congregation Council member, officer, employee, agent, or other member of any committee of this congregation, was or is threatened to be made a party to any threatened, pending or completed civil, criminal, administrative, arbitration, or investigative proceeding.

To add a new Chapter 20 in regard to parishes in the Model Constitution for Congregations as required provisions when a congregation is part of a parish:

**Chapter 20.**  
**PARISH AUTHORIZATION**

[\* Required provisions when congregation is part of a parish]

**\*C20.01.** This congregation may unite in partnership with one or more other congregations recognized by the synod named in \*C6.01. to form a parish. Except as provided in \*C20.02. and \*C20.03., a written agreement, developed in consultation with the synod and approved by the voting members of each congregation participating in the parish, shall specify the powers and responsibilities that have been delegated to a Parish Council.

**\*C20.02.** Whenever a letter of call is being recommended for extension to an ordained minister to serve the congregations of a parish, such letter of call shall be first approved by a two-thirds vote at congregational meetings of each of the congregations forming the parish. If any congregation of the parish should fail to approve extending this call, the other congregation(s) in the same parish shall have the right to terminate the parish arrangement.

**\*C20.03.** Any one of the congregations of a parish may terminate the call of a pastor as provided in †S14.13.d. of the Synod Constitution of the synod named in \*C6.01. In such case, the other congregation(s) in the same parish shall have the right to terminate the parish arrangement.