

Summary of Proposed Constitutional Amendments (2019)

The 2019 Churchwide Assembly adopted numerous amendments to the Model Constitution for Congregations. Under the ELCA's governing documents, Trinity is required to revise its constitution to include the changes in sections beginning with an asterisk (*). Changes in the sections that do not begin with an asterisk are optional.

The packet of amendments prepared for consideration at Trinity's 2019 annual meeting includes:

- a. Changes to mandated sections and addition of a new mandated section.
- b. Changes to optional sections already included in Trinity's constitution.
- c. Addition of one optional section allowing Trinity to hold meetings by telephonic or electronic communication.

Many of the amendments involve non-substantive changes that are stylistic or clarifying. However, the following amendments would make substantive changes:

*C5.04 would require Trinity to "elect" delegates to the Synod Assembly rather than to "choose" them. Although this could be problematic, Section V(1) of Trinity's Bylaws authorizes the Congregation Council, rather than the congregation, to "appoint" the delegates. As long as the Council votes to approve the delegates, Trinity would at least arguably be in compliance with the mandated change to *C5.04.

*C6.04 would subject Trinity to termination as an ELCA congregation if Trinity were to have a pastor who is not on the ELCA roster. In addition, subject to an appeal to the Synod Assembly, the Allegheny Synod would be authorized to dispose of Trinity's property if the congregation were to disband, cease to worship, become too small to function, or otherwise cease to exist.

*C6.05 would make changes in the procedure for voting to leave the ELCA. First, notice of the two meetings at which votes must be taken could be sent to members by means other than regular mail. Second, an additional notice would have to be given to members reporting the outcome of the second meeting. Third, if Trinity were to vote to leave the ELCA, becoming "independent" or a non-Lutheran church would not require an additional two-thirds vote.

*C7.05 would require Trinity to comply with any restrictions in the deed or other instrument conveying property from the Allegheny Synod to Trinity.

*C8.02 would prohibit a member from voting at a meeting of Trinity's congregation if the person voted within the preceding two months as a seasonal member of another congregation.

*C9.03 would require the pastor to encourage Trinity to adhere to the covenantal relationship with the ELCA as expressed in the ELCA's governing documents.

*C9.08 would require a departing pastor to satisfy any financial obligations to Trinity before beginning service to another congregation, even if that other congregation is not part of the ELCA.

*C9.14 would require a departing pastor to turn over Trinity's parochial records in good order before assuming a new call or requesting a change in roster status.

*C9.21 and *C9.25 would recognize a minister of Word and Service as a "deacon."

*C9.26 would require Trinity to satisfy any financial obligations to a former deacon before calling a new deacon.

C10.01 would require Trinity to have at least one "regular" meeting each year and to specify in the bylaws that one "regular" meeting shall be the "annual" meeting. This change is consistent with what Section I(1) of Trinity's Bylaws already provides.

C10.08 would allow Trinity to hold meetings electronically or by telephone, provided there is an opportunity for all participants to communicate with each other.

C12.01 would add the deacon to the voting membership of the Congregation Council if Trinity were to call a deacon.

C12.02 would allow members of the Congregation Council to be installed during worship on a Sunday other than the last one before their terms begin.

C13.05 would authorize the use of a call committee for any vacancy in a position to be filled by a rostered minister.

*C15.11 would specify that, in the event members were to take a congregational dispute with the pastor to the bishop of the Allegheny Synod, the bishop could address the dispute through the procedure prescribed in the synod's constitution.

*C18.03 would require Trinity to send copies of any adopted or amended continuing resolutions to the Allegheny Synod.