

Procedure for Changing a Congregational Constitution

Track 1: Summary of steps to update a constitution to include items not required by the Model Constitution of Congregations of the ELCA.

1. At least sixty days prior to a congregational meeting to approve a change apart from *C16.04 a written proposal is presented to the Congregational Council.
2. Inform the congregation that any changes to the constitution require an update to comply with the
3. If the proposal is approved by the designated number of voting members or the Congregational Council, then the steps below are followed:
 - a. The effective date of the resolution is calculated by working with the constitution committee to determine an appropriate timeline for the approval process.¹
 - b. The effective date is then included in the resolution and will be noted in the constitution (a footnote would be appropriate).
 - c. The Congregational Council shall notify the congregation's members of the proposal together with the council's recommendations at least 30 days in advance of a congregational meeting.
 - d. If the amendment is approved at the congregational meeting by a majority vote of those present and voting; then,
 - e. The amendment, unmodified, must be ratified at the congregation's annual meeting called in accordance with C10.01 by two-thirds vote of those voting members present and voting; then,
 - f. The amended constitution is forwarded to the constitution committee which ushers it through the approval review.
 - g. The recommendation of the constitution review committee is forwarded to the Synod Council for approval.
 - h. Upon vote by the Synod Council, the synod secretary notifies the congregation of the Synod Council's decision to approve or disapprove the proposed changes.
 - i. If the amendments are approved, the changes shall go into effect upon notification of the synod's approval.

Track 2: Summary of steps to update a constitution to be in conformity with Churchwide Requirements per *C16.04. (See Chart on next page and flowchart document)

¹ Appropriate time must be set aside for the constitution committee to read through the amendment and review the congregation's constitution. The item will then appear on the agenda of the next Synod Council meeting. As soon as the result of the vote is known, the synod secretary notifies the congregation through email.

Comparison Chart for Steps to Change a Congregation's Constitution

	To Amend to Conform to the <i>ELCA Model Constitution for Congregations</i>	All other amendments to Congregational Constitutions
Written Proposal	Completed by the ELCA churchwide Office of the Secretary. Available at elca.org	A written proposal is presented to the congregational council at least 60 days prior to any congregational action
Action by Congregational Council?	Yes. Majority Vote	Yes. Majority vote.
Coordination with Synod		The effective date of the resolution is calculated by working with the constitution committee to determine an appropriate timeline for the approval process.
Effective Date Included		The effective date is included in the resolution.
Congregation notified	The congregational council communicates its recommendation to the congregation and makes the provisions available for review by members at least 30 days prior to the congregational meeting.	The congregational council shall notify the congregation's members of the proposal together with the council's recommendations at least 30 days in advance of a congregational meeting.
Congregational Meeting	At the duly called congregational meeting, voting members approve the adoption of the "conformity" changes. A simple majority is required to move forward.	The amendment(s) are approved at the duly called congregational meeting. A simple majority is required to move forward.
Next Annual Meeting of the Congregation		The amendment, unmodified, must be ratified at the annual meeting called in accordance with C10.01. Ratified by a two-thirds vote of those voting members present and voting.
To Synod Secretary		The amended constitution is forwarded to the constitution committee, which ushers it through the approval review.
To Synod Council		The recommendation of the synod representative who reviews constitutions is forwarded to the synod council for approval.
Synod Council Vote		The synod council votes, and the result is communicated by the synod secretary to the congregation.
Effective Date	Upon adoption by the congregation	Upon notification of synod approval
Final Copy Forwarded to Synod Office	Congregational secretary forwards the newly amended constitution, bylaws and continuing resolutions to the synod office.	Already on file