

CONSTITUTION
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN CANADA

Table of Contents

| | |
|---------------|---|
| PREAMBLE | |
| ARTICLE I | Name and Incorporation |
| ARTICLE II | Confession of Faith |
| ARTICLE III | Nature of the Church |
| ARTICLE IV | Mission of the Church |
| ARTICLE V | Membership |
| ARTICLE VI | Congregations |
| ARTICLE VII | Ordained Ministers |
| ARTICLE VIII | Lay Diaconal Ministers |
| ARTICLE IX | Full Communion Provisions |
| ARTICLE X | Synods |
| ARTICLE XI | Conventions |
| ARTICLE XII | National Church Council |
| ARTICLE XIII | Officers |
| ARTICLE XIV | Divisions |
| ARTICLE XV | Offices |
| ARTICLE XVI | Department of Finance and Administration |
| ARTICLE XVII | Benefit and Pension Plans |
| ARTICLE XVIII | Auxiliaries, Special Interest Conferences and Recognized Independent Organizations |
| ARTICLE XIX | Court of Adjudication |
| ARTICLE XX | Administrative Bylaws |
| ARTICLE XXI | Amendments |

PREAMBLE

In the name of the Triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
Amen.

Believing in one holy catholic and apostolic Church,

Remembering the prayer of our Lord Jesus Christ that his
followers may be one,

Responding to the Holy Spirit as he continues to call and gather the church,

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada hereby resolves to adopt the following constitution to govern our life and witness in our country and throughout the world.

Last amended by the 2007 Convention.

ARTICLE I

Name and Incorporation

Section 1. This constitution has been passed pursuant to and is subject to the provisions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada Act and the corporate bylaws enacted pursuant to that Act.

Section 2. For purposes of this constitution and accompanying administrative bylaws the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada is hereby referred to as “this church.”

ARTICLE II

Confession of Faith

Section 1. This church confesses the Triune God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—as the one true God. It proclaims the Father as Creator and Preserver; His Son, Jesus Christ, as Redeemer and Lord; and the Holy Spirit as Regenerator and Sanctifier.

Section 2. This church confesses that the gospel is the revelation of God’s saving will and grace in Jesus Christ, which he imparts through Word and Sacrament. Through these means of grace the Holy Spirit creates believers and unites them with their Lord and with one another in the fellowship of the Holy Christian Church.

Section 3. This church confesses the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God, through which God still speaks, and as the only source of the church’s doctrine and the authoritative standard for the faith and life of the church.

Section 4. This church subscribes to the documents of the *Book of Concord of 1580* as witnesses to the way in which the Holy Scriptures have been correctly understood, explained and confessed for the sake of the gospel, namely:

- a. The Apostles’, the Nicene, and the Athanasian Creeds as the chief confessions of the Christian faith;
- b. The unaltered *Augsburg Confession* as its basic formulation of Christian doctrine;
- c. *Luther’s Small Catechism* as a clear summary of Christian doctrine;
- d. The *Apology of the Augsburg Confession*, *Luther’s Large Catechism*, the *Smalcald Articles with the Treatise*, and the *Formula of Concord* as further witnesses to the *Unaltered Augsburg Confession*.

ARTICLE III

Nature of the Church

Section 1. Jesus Christ is Lord of the Church. All power belongs to Him as its head. All actions of this church are to be carried out under His rule and authority.

Section 2. The Holy Spirit calls, gathers, enlightens and sanctifies the Church, which exists both as congregations gathered for worship, witness, education and service, and as an inclusive fellowship which has its own identity and integrity. Congregations find their fulfilment in the universal community of the Church, and the universal Church exists in and through congregations.

Section 3. This church derives its character and its powers both from its congregations and from its inherent nature as part of the Church universal. It regards itself as standing in the historic continuity of the communion of saints and as being an expression of that Christian fellowship in today's world.

ARTICLE IV

Mission of the Church

Section 1. The mission of this church, as an expression of the universal Church and as an instrument of the Holy Spirit, is to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with people in Canada and around the world through the proclamation of the Word and the celebration of the Sacraments and through service in Christ's name.

Section 2. In seeking to achieve its mission, this church shall:

- a. Receive, establish and maintain congregations in which the gospel is rightly preached and the Sacraments rightly administered;
- b. Admit persons to the roster of ordained ministers by ordination or transfer and be responsible for their nurture, support and discipline;
- c. Establish and maintain seminaries for the education and continuing development of ordained ministers and other church leaders;
- d. Establish and maintain, or otherwise recognize and support, schools for the education of its members and others for leadership in church and society;
- e. Establish and maintain, or otherwise recognize and support, institutions and agencies to minister to human need and in the name of Christ;
- f. Study issues in contemporary society in the light of the Word of God and respond publicly to social and moral issues as an advocate for justice and as an agent for reconciliation;
- g. Publish materials for the education and the edification of its own members and others interested in the life of the Lutheran Church;
- h. Develop the worship life of this church, providing or recommending service books and other material for congregational and personal use;

- i. Safeguard the faith and life of its congregations and ordained ministers, deciding all questions relating thereto on the basis of the Word of God and in accordance with its Confession of Faith;
- j. Establish church agencies and create regional synods for the administration of its program;
- k. Strive to unite all Lutherans within Canada in one church;
- l. Have relationships with other Lutheran church bodies and with other Christian churches for the furtherance of its mission; and
- m. Estimate the financial needs of this church, and solicit and disburse funds for its program.

ARTICLE V

Membership

Section 1. As provided in the corporate bylaws, the membership of this church consists of member congregations; baptized individuals who are members of a congregation (“baptized members”) shall exercise their privileges and responsibilities through participation in the congregation in which they are members.

Section 2. United in one Lord, one Faith and one Baptism, the members of this church are to be constant in worship and in the study of the Holy Scriptures, regularly nourishing their life in Christ in the Sacrament of the Altar, presenting their children for Holy Baptism and providing for their Christian instruction. They are called by the Spirit to lead godly lives, to promote the unity and welfare of the church in the bond of peace, to proclaim the gospel and to renounce the evil one. The commitment of each baptized member to this call is to be expressed through this church, its synods and its congregations by a life of repentance, faith, prayer and the sharing of resources.

ARTICLE VI

Congregations

Section 1. A congregation of this church is a worshipping, learning, witnessing and serving community of persons baptized in the Name of the Triune God among whom the Word is proclaimed and the Sacraments are administered according to the gospel, the corporate existence of which is recognized by this church.

Section 2. Each congregation shall operate in accordance with its constitution, owning its property, making decisions in regard to its programming, calling its pastor(s) after consulting with the bishop of the synod, and retaining authority in all other matters that have not been committed to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada or its synods in this constitution or by subsequent enactments.

Section 3. After the organization of this church, reception of a congregation shall be by action of the synod on whose territory it is located. Each congregation shall, in its application for reception into this church, agree to abide loyally by the constitution, administrative bylaws and enactments of this church and those of the synod of which it becomes a part.

Section 4. Each congregation of this church shall include in its constitution or bylaws an article which prohibits corporate worship with any organization which practices the forms of religion without confessing faith in the Triune God and in Jesus Christ, the eternal and incarnated Son of God, as our only Saviour.

Section 5. Congregations shall elect the delegates who shall represent them in conventions of the synod.

Section 6. Congregations shall have the right to petition this church and its synods, according to procedures set forth in the administrative bylaws.

Section 7. All proposed changes in the amendable portions of the constitution or incorporation documents of a congregation shall be reported to the bishop of the synod and shall become effective upon approval by the synod council.

Section 8. Each congregation shall include in its constitution a provision that in the event of its disbanding or ceasing to exist all property—real, personal and mixed—not disposed of by it shall vest in the synod to which it belongs, its successors or assigns.

Section 9. A congregation which has ceased to exist or whose membership has so diminished in numbers as to render it impossible or impractical for such congregation to function according to its constitution and bylaws, shall after consultation with any remaining members be deemed by the synod of which it is a part to be defunct. The synod, through the synod council, shall appoint trustees, including where feasible former members of the congregation, who shall take charge and control of the property of said congregation to hold, manage and convey the same on behalf of this synod.

Section 10. A congregation, which desires to sever its relationship with this church, shall make written application to its synod for a proper release. The synod shall grant such request following the process set out in the administrative bylaws of this church.

Section 11. A synod, acting for this church, may exclude a congregation from the membership of this church for proper cause by the disciplinary process prescribed in the administrative bylaws. This action may be appealed to the Court of Adjudication whose decision therein shall be final.

ARTICLE VII

Ordained Ministers

Section 1. God has instituted the office of the ordained ministry, that is, the ministry of Word and Sacrament, as a means of creating and nourishing faith within the Church.

Section 2. Each synod shall establish a roster of ordained ministers. The administrative bylaws of this church shall define the standards for acceptance into its ordained ministry, and for the admission and continuance of individuals on its roster of ordained ministers in a manner consistent with this article. Each synod shall maintain its roster of ordained ministers in accordance with such standards. Each ordained minister must covenant to abide loyally by the constitution, administrative bylaws and enactments of this church and of the synod.

Section 3. Ordination of candidates and reception of ordained ministers shall be the function of the synods, acting on behalf of this church. Synods shall also have responsibility for recruitment, approval and supervision of all candidates for the ordained ministry. An applicant who is an ordained minister in good standing of a church with which this church has established a mutual recognition of ministers shall upon acceptance of a call within this church be received by a certificate of transfer or equivalent documentation. Applicants for ordination or for reception from other churches shall appear before the examining committee of the synod, and can be ordained or otherwise admitted only upon recommendation by such committee. The members of the examining committee shall be appointed or elected by the synod.

Section 4. Each ordained minister shall conform in preaching and teaching to the Confession of Faith of this church and shall lead a life befitting the office.

Section 5. No ordained minister shall belong to any organization, which in its documents, rites or practices contradicts the gospel of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.

Section 6. Subject to the provisions of the administrative bylaws of this church each ordained minister, except those who are retired or disabled, shall be in possession of a call from a congregation, a synod or this church itself.

Section 7. Each ordained minister of this church shall be a member of one of its synods and also, unless this requirement is waived in an exceptional case in accordance with the administrative bylaws, of one of its congregations.

Section 8. The discipline of ordained ministers on a synod's roster shall be the responsibility of the synod and shall be dealt with in the manner set out in the administrative bylaws of this church. A synod shall form a Committee of Discipline whenever necessary. The structure, composition and responsibilities of a Committee of Discipline, and its procedures, shall be as set out in the administrative bylaws of this church. Disciplinary action may be appealed by an ordained minister who has been disciplined to the Court of Adjudication, whose decision therein shall be final (cf. Article XVIII, 9, 10).

ARTICLE VIII

Lay Diaconal Ministers

Section 1. A synod may admit individuals as lay diaconal ministers. In doing so the synod shall comply with and administer the provisions of this article and shall maintain a roster of those admitted and continued as lay diaconal ministers.

Section 2. Consecration of candidates as and reception of lay diaconal ministers shall be the function of the synods. Synods shall also have responsibility for recruitment, approval and supervision of all candidates for the lay diaconal ministry. Applicants for consecration or for reception shall appear before the examining committee of the synod, and may be consecrated or otherwise admitted only upon recommendation by such committee. The members of the examining committee shall be appointed or elected by the synod.

Section 3. Each lay diaconal minister shall covenant to abide loyally by the constitution, administrative bylaws and enactments of this church and of the synod.

Section 4. Each lay diaconal minister shall conform in teaching to the Confession of Faith of this church and shall lead a life befitting the office.

Section 5. Subject to the provisions of the administrative bylaws of this church each lay diaconal minister, except those who are retired or disabled, shall be in possession of a call from a congregation or a synod or this church itself. Under the conditions stated in the administrative bylaws, a lay diaconal minister on leave from call may be retained on the roster of lay diaconal ministers from year to year for no more than three consecutive years by action of the appropriate synod. A lay diaconal minister on leave from call for parental leave or study leave may be granted an additional five consecutive years by action of the appropriate synod.

Section 6. The synod shall be responsible for discipline of lay diaconal ministers on its roster. A Committee on Discipline shall be formed, when necessary. The composition and responsibilities of the Committee on Discipline shall be set out in the administrative bylaws. Disciplinary action may be appealed to the Court of Adjudication, whose decision therein shall be final.

ARTICLE IX

Full Communion Provisions

Section 1. Ordered ministers of churches with which this church has a full communion agreement, who are serving in this church under the provisions of that full communion agreement, shall have the same rights and privileges as the equivalent order of ministry in this church.

ARTICLE X

Synods

Section 1. The church shall be organized regionally into synods whose number and boundaries are to be determined by this church in its administrative bylaws.

Section 2. Each synod shall be incorporated in keeping with the terms of appropriate documents ratified by this church in convention or by the National Church Council. Amendments thereto shall be subject to ratification.

Section 3. Each synod shall have a constitution ratified by this church in convention or by the National Church Council. Amendments thereto shall be subject to like ratification.

Section 4. Each congregation shall normally be a part of the synod on whose territory it is located.

Section 5. Included on the roster of ordained ministers of each synod shall be those who are:

- a. Under call from (a) congregation(s) in that synod;
- b. Under call from that synod;
- c. Under call from this church, in the synod to which the minister belonged at the time of the issuance of such call unless otherwise assigned by the bishop of this church;
- d. Designated as “on leave from call” as provided in the administrative bylaws of this church; and
- e. Retired or disabled, in the synod in which the minister last had a call or resides.

Section 6. It shall be the responsibility of each synod to:

- a. Shepherd congregations, ordained ministers, deaconesses and its lay workers;
- b. Advance the Church’s mission within its jurisdiction;
- c. Conserve unity in the true faith and guard against any departure from it;

- d. Develop the resources of God's people for the advancement of His Kingdom at home and throughout the world; and
- e. Co-operate with the National Church Council and the synods in implementing its programs.

Section 7. Synods shall carry out such additional duties and responsibilities as are assigned to them in the administrative bylaws.

Section 8. Each synod shall have the right to petition this church according to the procedures set forth in the administrative bylaws.

Section 9. As a regional expression of this church, each synod shall have jurisdiction in its affairs and be responsible for its life and ministry as delineated in its constitution and administrative bylaws.

Section 10. The bishops of the synods and the bishop of this church shall meet at least once a year for spiritual renewal and the discussion of programs, plans and problems affecting the synods and this church. Except where otherwise provided in this constitution and its administrative bylaws, the function of such a meeting shall be consultative and advisory.

ARTICLE XI

Conventions

Section 1. The convention of this church shall be its highest legislative authority.

Section 2. A convention of this church shall be held biennially at a time and place determined by the National Church Council.

Section 3. Special conventions shall be called for specified purposes by the bishop of this church to be held within ninety days of receiving a request in writing from two-thirds of the members of the National Church Council or from two-thirds of the synods.

Section 4. The secretary shall publish the time and place of each regular convention at least six months in advance. The secretary shall give written notice of a special convention to each congregation and each ordained minister serving under call, and shall publish the same at least thirty days prior to the opening date of the convention.

Section 5. The voting membership of conventions shall consist of:

- a. Two hundred ordained ministers elected by the conferences as allocated by the National Church Council on the basis of baptized membership; and
- b. A lay delegate elected by each parish* not already represented by an ordained minister and an additional lay delegate elected by every parish with more than eight hundred baptized members. Any parish with less than eight hundred members represented by an ordained minister for two consecutive conventions may not be represented by an ordained minister at the following convention.
- c. Twelve youth selected by the synods as members of the youth assembly.

Section 6. The voting membership at a special convention shall consist of the delegates seated in the preceding regular convention provided they have not been disqualified by termination of membership in the parish they represented. Vacancies in delegations shall be filled by conferences and parishes as necessary.

Section 7. A quorum shall consist of twenty per cent of the eligible voting members provided that such members are from at least two-thirds of the synods.

*A parish is defined as consisting of those baptized persons served by a common pastoral ministry in one or more congregations.

ARTICLE XII

National Church Council

Section 1. There shall be a National Church Council comprised of the officers of this church, who shall serve as the officers of the council; and additional members from the synods allocated on the basis of proportional representation according to baptized membership; and other representatives from full communion agreements. Each synod shall be represented by at least one lay person and one ordained minister, and the total number of lay persons shall equal or exceed the total number of ordained ministers. The distribution of additional members shall be specified in the administrative bylaws. The additional members shall be elected by the convention and shall be eligible to serve no more than two consecutive four-year terms. Synod bishops shall be present as advisory members. Terms of elected members shall be such that half of the members shall be elected at each convention. Vacancies shall be filled by the National Church Council until the next regular convention. A member of the National Church Council who is an ordained minister who has been suspended from the office of the ordained ministry or removed from the roster of ordained ministers by a synod council, may be removed from membership on the National Church Council by a majority or a least two-thirds of the members of the National Church Council at a meeting duly called and held for such purpose.

Section 2. The council shall meet at least twice a year. Additional meetings may be called by the bishop of this church and must be called if requested in writing by a majority of the members of the council.

Section 3. The council shall:

- a. Be the directors of the corporation and trustees for this church;
- b. Encourage an ongoing process of renewal in the life and work of this church;
- c. Engage in long-range planning for this church, with emphasis on spiritual life and growth, for approval by the convention;
- d. Attend to communication and stewardship as integral aspects of the work of this church;
- e. Recommend annual budgets to the regular conventions;
- f. Supervise the expenditures of the funds of this church, subject to the provisions of the administrative bylaws and the budgets adopted by the convention;
- g. Fill vacancies not otherwise provided for and determine the fact of the incapacity of an officer of this church;

- h. Be responsible for the implementation of all ecumenical and inter-church relations of this church and its agencies, which have been approved by the convention;
- i. Approve all ecumenical and inter-church relations of the synods of this church and their agencies;
- j. Appoint, as required, the members of all committees;
- k. Report actions taken by the council to the next convention;
- l. Interpret the constitutions and administrative bylaws of this church, its synods and congregations upon request;
- m. Provide for the orientation of its members to duties and responsibilities of the National Church Council, and regular evaluation of the work of the National Church Council; and
- n. Perform the additional duties of the council prescribed in the constitution, administrative bylaws and resolutions of this church.

ARTICLE XIII

Officers

Section 1. This church shall be served by a bishop who shall be its chief pastor and chief executive officer. The other officers shall be a vice-president, a secretary and a treasurer. The bishop shall be on the roster of ordained ministers of this church. At least two of these officers shall be lay members of this church.

Section 2. The officers shall be elected by the convention for a term of four years according to procedures established in the administrative bylaws. All officers shall serve until their successors assume office.

Section 3. Should a vacancy occur *ad interim* in any of the offices with the exception of the office of bishop, the National Church Council is empowered to fill the same until the next regular convention or to call a special convention to fill the vacancy. Each election by a convention shall be for a full term of office.

Section 4. The terms of the officers shall begin on the first day of the third full month following election.

Section 5. The bishop of this church shall:

- a. Serve as its leader and counsellor;
- b. Seek to preserve its peace and order;
- c. Call, convene and preside over its conventions and the meetings of the National Church Council;
- d. Speak publicly and witness for the gospel on behalf of this church;
- e. Oversee the officers and executive staff;
- f. Co-ordinate the work of its committees, and serve in an *ex officio* capacity;
- g. Represent this church at meetings of the auxiliaries and recognized independent organizations;

- h. Convene meetings of the bishops of the synods;
- i. Serve as the primary representative of this church in all inter-church associations and councils in which it holds membership; and
- j. Perform the additional duties prescribed in the constitution, administrative bylaws and resolutions of this church.

Section 6. The vice-president shall:

- a. Preside at the general convention and at meetings of the National Church Council upon the request of the bishop;
- b. In the event of the death, resignation or incapacity of the bishop, convene the National Church Council to provide for the discharge of the bishop's duties pending the election of a new bishop at a regular or special convention; and
- c. Perform the additional duties prescribed in the constitution, administrative bylaws and resolutions of this church.

Section 7. The secretary shall:

- a. Keep or cause to be kept the minutes of the conventions and prepare or cause to be prepared such minutes for publication;
- b. Have charge of records, registers and archives;
- c. Be the custodian of the seal of this church;
- d. Attest all documents of this church as required; and
- e. Perform the additional duties prescribed in the constitution, administrative bylaws and resolutions of this church.

Section 8. The treasurer shall:

- a. Be the fiscal officer of this church;
- b. Make full report of the financial affairs of this church to conventions and to the National Church Council; and
- c. Perform the additional duties prescribed in the constitution, administrative bylaws and resolutions of this church.

ARTICLE XIV

Divisions

Section 1. This church shall carry out its work in mission and ministry through such divisions as may be established in the administrative bylaws.

Section 2. In establishing a division in the administrative bylaws, such provision shall set out the objectives of the division and the method by which such objectives are to be accomplished.

ARTICLE XV

Offices

Section 1. This church shall provide ongoing support services for the divisions and this church through such offices as may be established in the administrative bylaws.

Section 2. In establishing an office in the administrative bylaws such provision shall set out the objectives of the office and the method by which such objectives are intended to be accomplished.

ARTICLE XVI

Department of Finance and Administration

Section 1. The National Church Council shall, through its Department of Finance and Administration, have responsibility for the general oversight and control of the finance and business management of this church. As such it shall:

- a. Provide for this church the treasury and accounting functions, data processing, auditing service, legal counsel and personnel service, and arrange for the necessary office space and equipment;
- b. Administer the finances of this church;
- c. Ensure that there be sound and responsible fiscal management by its divisions, offices, committees and institutions;
- d. Develop budgetary procedures and prepare annual budget recommendations;
- e. Periodically review the receipts, expenditures and financial conditions of this church, and recommend to the church when adjustments are necessary to ensure that expenditures do not exceed the funds available in the current fiscal year;
- f. Manage the investment programs for this church, excluding pension funds and benefit programs; and
- g. Borrow funds and guarantee loans.

ARTICLE XVII

Benefit and Pension Plans

Section 1. The administrative bylaws shall provide for the participation by ordained ministers and lay employees of this church, its synods, congregations, agencies, institutions, and other recognized organizations in a pension plan and in a group benefits plan. The administrative bylaws may establish rules providing for the participation of such employers and employees in such plans on a compulsory basis, and may determine the methods to be adopted by the participants in such plans in order to provide for the proper administration of such plans.

Section 2. The convention may review any such benefit or pension plan and may make recommendations to the administrator of such plan or to the National Church Council on any proposed amendments to such plan, and may from time to time provide advice and direction to the administrator with respect to any proposed amendment to such plan.

ARTICLE XVIII

Auxiliaries, Special Interest Conferences and Recognized Independent Organizations

Section 1. All auxiliaries of this church, as autonomous organizations officially recognized by this church, shall function under constitutions which have been approved by the National Church Council and shall operate within the provisions of this constitution, its administrative bylaws and actions of the convention. The auxiliaries shall interrelate with this church in the manner set forth in the administrative bylaws.

Section 2. This church shall recognize those special interest conferences and special congregational relationships existing at the time of merger. This church may authorize, as provided in the administrative bylaws, the organization of additional special interest conferences having common linguistic or cultural heritages. Such conferences may hold periodic meetings for fellowship and discussion of common concerns. Reports of meetings, together with any recommendations arising out of their special sphere of interest, shall be made to the National Church Council.

Section 3. This church shall recognize independent Lutheran organizations and institutions established for Christian education, for the care of the ill, the aged and the infirm or for missionary endeavour as approved by the National Church Council.

ARTICLE XIX

Court of Adjudication

Section 1. There shall be a Court of Adjudication.

Section 2. The Court of Adjudication shall consist of seven members, four lay and three ordained, who shall be elected by the convention for a term of four years. No member may hold a position on Church Council, synod council or a synodical committee for theological education and leadership. No member shall serve more than two consecutive terms. A vacancy occurring *ad interim* may be filled by the National Church Council until the next regular convention, which shall fill the unexpired term.

Section 3. A quorum shall consist of five members. Four members must concur in any decision.

Section 4. The court shall elect its own officers.

Section 5. Due notice of the time and place of meetings of the court shall be given by its secretary to all persons involved in the case and shall be published in the official church paper.

Section 6. The court may make rules and orders in any matter of procedure not provided for in this article in order to facilitate the proper and expeditious handling of its business.

Section 7. Questions of principle or practice which may arise under this constitution or otherwise within this church, including questions involving disputed jurisdiction or the interpretation of powers claimed,

conferred or recognized by this church, may be referred to this court for decision. Referral of such questions shall be by resolution of the convention or the National Church Council. The decisions of the court in such matters shall be binding until reversed by vote of the convention.

Section 8. Questions of doctrine or conscience may also be referred to the court for its counsel at the discretion of the convention. Such opinions of the court shall be submitted to the convention for its scrutiny and decision.

Section 9. Disciplinary actions of Synod Councils may be appealed to the court. The decisions of the court in such matters shall be final. Such decisions shall be reported to the parties involved in the appeal and to the bishop of this church.

Section 10. An appeal made under ARTICLE VI, Section 11 and ARTICLE VII, Section 8 must be in writing and must be filed with the secretary of the court within forty-five days from the date of the decision, which is being appealed. The court shall hear and determine the appeal on the data upon which the decision appealed was based and render its verdict in writing. The court may for the purpose of hearing and determining the appeal receive such further evidence and in such manner and form as it in its sole discretion may determine.

Section 11. All decisions and opinions of the Court of Adjudication, except those covered by Section 9, shall be published in the official church paper and in the bulletin of reports in full or in summary form, as directed by the president of the court, at least three weeks before the opening of the convention to which they are to be reported.

Section 12. Notice of intention to appeal from a decision of the Court of Adjudication, other than in a case involving disciplinary action or recall or dismissal of an officer, must be given in writing to the president of the court and to the secretary of this church at least six days prior to the opening of the convention to which the court's report of said decision is to be made. Such appeal must be signed by at least twenty-five delegates representing a majority of the synods. Following the submission and hearing of the appeal, the vote therein shall not be taken before the succeeding day, unless by reason of limited available time the convention shall by a two-thirds vote decide to act on the appeal on the same day. To sustain the appeal and so reverse the decision of the Court of Adjudication shall require a two-thirds vote of delegates present and voting.

Section 13. The court shall perform such other duties as prescribed in the administrative bylaws.

ARTICLE XX

Administrative Bylaws

Section 1. This church may adopt such administrative bylaws, not in conflict with this constitution, as may be necessary. Such administrative bylaws may be amended at any convention by a two-thirds vote of the delegates present and voting. At least one day shall elapse between first presentation and convention action unless unanimous consent to amendment is given.

Administrative bylaws relating to convention procedure may be suspended by a two-thirds vote of the delegates present and voting.

ARTICLE XXI

Amendments

Section 1. ARTICLE II on “Confession of Faith” shall be unalterable.

Section 2. Amendments to this constitution shall be in writing and may be proposed by:

- a. The National Church Council;
- b. A synod; or
- c. Ten or more convention delegates representing no fewer than three synods.

Section 3. All proposed amendments must be reported to the convention no later than the first full day of business. The National Church Council shall make report and recommendation during that convention on all proposed amendments. Adoption of an amendment shall require passage at this and the next regular convention by a two-thirds vote of the delegates present and voting. The full text thereof shall be published in the official church periodical at least one month prior to the second reading.

- - -