



ELCIC

*In Mission
for Others*

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

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Dear members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada,

Grace to you and peace in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

Over the last few years at Synod Conventions, through my column in *Canada Lutheran*, and in various other ways, I have been sharing with you that our church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, has been facing significant challenges. Our membership numbers have been in decline since almost the inception of our church and the financial resources for the work of the wider church have also been in decline. This has impacted our ability to live out our call to be a church *In Mission for Others*.

To face these challenges our church has been involved in a renewal process. Spiritual Renewal to deepen our discipleship and revitalize our church, and Structural Renewal to help us be a church that is flexible, affordable and sustainable as we are *In Mission for Others*.

The initial recommendations for structural renewal included significant changes to the structure of synods, including amalgamation of some synods. Synods dealt with these proposals at their last conventions.

As we prepare for the 2013 Joint Assembly, our focus turns to changes in the structure of the National Church. These changes are imbedded in proposed changes to the *Constitution* and *Administrative Bylaws* of this church.

Let me share a few broad strokes about the proposed changes.

1. First of all, you will see significant change to the *Constitution* — it is greatly slimmed down! We have adopted the principle that the *Constitution* will only describe the “who and what” the ELCIC is. All the details of “how” things happen are moved to the *Administrative Bylaws*.
2. The biggest substantive change to the *Constitution* is the creation of Synodically Recognized Ministries which will allow people to hold membership in our church in ministries that are smaller than congregations. I think this is a wonderful new option that will provide flexibility and help our church to grow.
3. The other main changes are to the size and frequency of the National Convention, to the size of National Church Council, and to the composition and terms of the Officers of the church. These changes are driven by both governance principles and by the need for cost savings. I hope that they will allow us to direct more resources towards mission and ministry!

I urge you to read through the accompanying ***Structural Renewal Implementation Guide*** that outlines in more detail the proposed changes that are coming to the 2013 Joint Assembly; read the attached amendments to the *Constitution* and the draft *Administrative Bylaws*; discuss them in your conferences, clergy clusters, and in your congregation. Then let us know what you are thinking!

Finally, please join me in praying for our church, that God would lead us and guide us, and that we would be strengthened for faithful discipleship and equipped for mission locally and around the world.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, starting with a cross symbol and followed by the name Susan C. Johnson in a cursive script.

The Rev. Susan C. Johnson
National Bishop,
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada — *In Mission for Others*