

## **Structural Renewal**

### **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)**

#### **1. What is new in these recommendations?**

- Conferences are eliminated; no governance level between congregations and synods
- Areas and Area Leadership Teams are added to support mission at the local level
- Synods reduced to 3 from 5
- Synod Conventions held triennially (not biennially)
- Only active rostered leaders are eligible as delegates for Synod and National Conventions
- National Church relates to synods and wider church (not congregations)
- Clarity of roles between National and synodical expressions of the church
- Smaller National Church Council; 17 total vs. 21 with equal representation from all synods
- Synodical bishops have vote on National Church Council
- National Conventions held triennially (not biennially)
- 50 delegates (lay and rostered) from each synod at National Convention
- Synod elects delegates to National Convention
- Opportunity for renewal events

#### **2. What is this Convention being asked to approve?**

The Convention is being asked to approve the recommendations of the Structural Renewal Taskforce in principle in order that further details may be worked out for decision making at future Conventions.

#### **3. What are the next steps?**

National and Synodical Implementations Teams will be appointed (as outlined in Supporting Document J) to begin to work out details of how the recommendations of the Task Force will be carried out in each of the Synods and the National Church. These teams will be appointed by the National and synodical bishops.

The details that are worked out by the Implementation Teams, in conjunction with their respective Councils, will need approval from the next Synodical and National Conventions before they can be implemented.

#### **4. Why 3 Synods and not 2, 1, 12, or as is, 5?**

The survey, geography and equal distribution of numbers of congregations indicated strong support for 3 synods.

- a) Why not two?—Two Synods would be disproportionate in geographical and numerical size. The Eastern Synod would have 201 congregations and the Western Synods, 392 congregations. Two synods could contribute to polarization.

- b) Why not one?—This would mean that we have just a single National Church and the survey gave minimal support for that.
- c) Why not five or as many as 12? Due to declining membership numbers and financial resources the current structure of five synods, with the administrative and governance costs associated with them, is no longer sustainable. Creating more synods would serve to exacerbate this problem. The proposed structure is intended to support mission and ministry with Area Leadership Teams.

**5. Will three synods save us money?**

The proposed structure gives us future flexibility to scale up or down as needed, whereas the current structure does not permit that possibility as easily. As well, the dollars spent will enable more mission than administration, reflecting better stewardship of our financial resources.

**6. Will any synod have disproportionate power and influence in a three synod church?**

There will be a balance in the number of congregations and membership as well as equal representation at National Convention and on National Church Council.

**7. Has restructuring been financially driven?**

This restructuring is for tomorrow's membership. It is mission-driven and addresses the reality of governance, organizational structure and finances for the ministry of a smaller church.

**8. Is there a budget for restructuring?**

All synods and National Church will be responsible for the costs of restructuring.

**9. Do Area Leadership Teams add cost to the total structure?**

The cost of the proposed model is the same or less as our current structure. Costs of Area Leadership Teams, such as ongoing training, will be offset by administrative savings at the synod and national level.

**10. Has the Human Sexuality issue contributed to declining membership necessitating restructuring?**

Mainline Protestant churches have been declining since the mid-1960s. The ELCIC has been no exception with both membership and financial resources in decline since our formation in 1986.

**11. Why are we focusing on a shrinking church rather than trying to find ways to make it grow?**

Responsible stewardship demands both and the proposal for restructuring focuses on both. The call to spiritual renewal will be advanced by the proposed Areas of Congregations which will be supported by trained Area Leadership Teams.

**12. With the reduced size of NCC, will there be a centralization of power with too few people?**

Members of NCC will be elected at the National Convention. The current structure has twenty-one voting members. The proposed model has seventeen with equal representation from each synod.

**13. Will smaller National Conventions concentrate decision making with too few people?**

From the survey 64.7% of rostered respondents and 62.9% of lay respondents favored reducing the size of the National Convention. With the new model there will be 150 delegates.

**14. How does a congregation take an issue to the floor of National Convention?**

Congregations may bring their concerns before the wider church by petitioning their Synod Convention or Synod Council. Once affirmed the matter would come before the National Convention. Moreover, every member and congregations may correspond with NCC at any time.

**15. Why have we removed retired pastors from being delegates at Synod Conventions?**

The decisions that are made at Synod Conventions carry significant responsibilities for congregations to both implement and fund the decisions. In order to ensure that these responsibilities are taken seriously, the delegates who vote, thereby “make decisions”, at conventions must be actively involved in decision making in the consistencies which they represent—their own congregations or specialized ministries. In order to be representative of congregations and specialized ministries, there should be more lay delegates than rostered at conventions.

The size of the retired roster is growing disproportionately to the size of the active roster. To restore the balance to a higher ratio of lay delegates to rostered, and to ensure that congregations and specialized ministries commit to the decisions that are made at convention, the recommendation is that only rostered persons in an active call be eligible as a rostered delegate

**16. Why have we removed retired pastors from being delegates at National Conventions?**

It’s about consistency: delegates to National Convention should also be eligible for Synod Convention.

**17. Does the role of synodical and/or National Bishops change?**

Recommendation number 3 outlines the role of synodical bishops, and recommendation number six the National Bishop. Area Leadership Teams will allow synodical bishops to give more direct support to congregations than is the case in the current structure.

**18. Where is the responsibility for worship?**

First and foremost the responsibility for worship is at the local level, supported by Area Leadership Teams and the synod. National Church support comes through facilitation of co-operative programming.

**19. Where is the responsibility for Youth?**

First and foremost the responsibility for youth is at the local level, supported by Area Leadership Teams and the synods. National Church support comes through facilitation of co-operative programming.

**20. What was the process for consultation? Did everyone have a chance to input?**

The Structural Renewal Task Force has been communicating (via *Canada Lutheran*, *ELCIC* website, correspondence from National Bishop Susan Johnson) throughout the process with opportunities for input as follows:

- National/Synodical Officers Consultation February 2009
- Meetings with Synod Councils Fall 2009
- Meetings with Synod Conventions Spring, Summer 2010
- Online survey Summer 2010
- Meeting with conferences Fall 2010
- Presentation of preliminary recommendations to synod bishops December 2010
- Presentation of preliminary recommendations to NCC April 2011

**21. Do we have to do this all at once?**

This is not an add-on to an existing structure. This is a brand-new structure with interrelated pieces with financial implications. This is not a menu, it's a package deal, a comprehensive system.

**22. Do the terms of bishops and officers change with less-frequent conventions?**

They will need to change to either 3 or 6-year terms with the number of times renewable also reviewed.