



Guidelines for Constitutional Updates, Review and Approval

1. It is recommended that a Congregation considering updating their Constitution form a committee of 3 – 5 (or more) people tasked with reviewing both the congregation's current constitution, and the Model Constitution for Congregations provided by the ELCA. Before you begin, your committee should carefully review your own constitution's procedure and timeline for changing and ratifying changes. Often this can be a lengthy process. Your committee should also review the following documents available through the **NWOS website**:
 - a. Introduction to Congregational Model Constitution
 - b. Use of the Model Constitution for Congregations 2013
 - c. ELCA Model Constitution for Congregations 2016
 - d. Your own congregation's constitution
2. After reviewing the documents, the committee should inform the NWOS Synod Administrator that they have begun the review process. Your Synod Administrator will then answer any preliminary questions and provide the committee with the most recent constitutional changes passed by the ELCA Churchwide Assembly. Your Synod Administrator will also be able to inform you of the process timeline, and important deadlines.
3. Your committee can then begin to draft changes to the constitution. Changes should **not conflict** with the ELCA Model Constitution for Congregations and required provisions must be included. If and when questions arise, your committee should contact the NWOS Synod Administrator for clarification and guidance.

Working in tandem with the Synod Administrator will allow for a quicker process, and will make the approval process easier.

4. When your committee has finished drafting changes and updates, they should be submitted to the NWOS Synod Administrator for review. Please submit **via email** both: updates/changes in a **separate Microsoft Word file**, and your **complete constitution** (with changes). The Administrator will work with the Synod Constitution's Review committee to ensure that your updates are in line with the Model Constitution. Please allow **4 – 6 weeks** for review.

It is very important that you allow your Synod Administrator and the Constitutions Review Committee to review your changes before your

Congregation or even your council approves and ratifies any changes. This initial approval process will help to expedite the Synod Council's approval of your changes.

5. Once the review is complete, the Synod Administrator will contact your committee with approval or recommend changes. Once everything has been approved, your committee may present the updates and changes to your congregational council for debate and approval. Once approved by the Church Council, final ratification of the updated constitution must take place by the congregation at a Congregational Meeting.

Follow your own constitution's outline and timeline for passing and ratifying changes.

6. Once your Congregation has ratified the changes, notify the Synod Administrator, who will present the updated Constitution to the Synod Council for final approval. Synod Council only meets **quarterly**, so careful planning and coordination with your Synod Administrator is of utmost importance for you to have an accurate timeline for ratification by your Congregation and approval by Synod Council.

***By grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God
Ephesians 2:8***



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God's work. Our hands.