

Northwestern MN Synod of the ELCA

Congregation Checklist for a Simple Update to the congregation Constitution

This document is a step-by-step checklist for a congregation constitution revision committee to use when they have determined that the congregation's constitution will only need to be updated using required and non-required provisions of the model constitution for congregations. If the committee decides to include other provision of their own making or beyond the model constitution, you must use the "Expanded Update" checklist.

Simple Update Process (C.16.04)¹

Follow these steps when only using required and non-required provisions of the Model constitution for congregations.

- ☐ Congregation Committee Creates an amended constitution draft (**Glossary 9**)
 - ☐ Find or create a digital copy of congregation's current constitution (**Glossary 10**)
 - ☐ Using current constitution committee creates a copy of the current constitution
 - ☐ Rename copy similar to: [Insert Congregation name] Amended Constitution Draft
 - ☐ Using the Model Constitution for Congregations:
 - ☐ Update changes to required provisions (**Glossary 11**)
 - ☐ Add any new required provisions
 - ☐ Determine which, if any, non-required provisions (**Glossary 12**) to update or add
 - ☐ Update or add those non-required provisions to add
- ☐ Once draft is complete, committee reviews draft
- ☐ Committee Chair submits draft to Liaison

*Wait for Liaison to return draft with report. If the Liaison Report (**Glossary 13**) includes mandatory corrections (**Glossary 14**) or suggested corrections (**Glossary 15**) follow the "With Corrections" step below. Once you receive report from the liaison without mandatory corrections and with pre-approval (**Glossary 16**) (or suggested corrections which you chose not to include) skip to the "Pre-Approved" Step Below.*

¹ Chapter 16 Section 4 of the Model Constitution for Congregations describes the process by which a congregation can amend a constitution if they are only updating their constitutions by updating or including required and non-required provisions of the Model Constitution for Congregations.

With Corrections

- ☐ Update draft to:
 - ☐ Include any mandatory corrections by the Liaison²
 - ☐ Include any suggested corrections by the Liaison³
- ☐ Re-submit newly updated draft to the liaison

Wait for the Liaison to return updated draft with report. If more corrections, repeat the previous steps until you are given pre-approval. Once you receive pre-approval continue to “Pre-Approval Granted” Steps Below.

Pre-Approval Granted

- ☐ Committee Chair submits pre-approved amended draft to the congregation council
- ☐ Council schedules a special meeting⁴ (**Glossary 18**) of the congregation (or waits for next regular meeting of the congregation)
 - ☐ At least 30 Days prior to meeting council provides Proposal of Recommendations (**Glossary 19**) to the congregation
- ☐ At the Special Meeting, the congregation votes to approve the draft constitution as amended
- ☐ If approved, the church secretary, president, Constitution committee chair, or someone else submits the approved constitution to the Liaison.

After the vote the amended constitution draft is no longer an amended draft, but an official constitution and governing document of the congregation.

² Mandatory corrections must be made, if they are not included the synod will not approve the constitution. If you want to dispute a mandatory correction. Please contact the Synod Revision Committee Chair (**Glossary 17**)

³ Suggested corrections need not be included in future drafts of the amended constitution. They are simply corrections suggested by the liaison to include added clarification to language, formatting, or to ensure ambiguity or clarity about a provision. Suggested Provision may also include recommendations around provisions that are repetitive or may be interpreted to conflict with mandatory provisions or other provisions. It is up to the Congregation Committee’s discretion whether to include suggested provisions in the draft amended constitution. If a suggested correction is not included, the synod will likely still approve the constitution.

⁴ If a special meeting is called the only order of business is to approve the amended constitution draft, **no other business** can be conducted. If the vote is held during a regular meeting, other business can be conducted.