

**Northwestern MN Synod of the ELCA**  
*Glossary of Terms for the Constitution Revision Process*

**Glossary**

**1. Congregation Constitution Revision Committee**

The committee formed by the church council (possibly with the advice of the pastor and nominating committee) to spearhead the constitution revision process for the committee.

**2. Congregation Constitution Revision Committee Chair**

The chair of the Congregation Constitution Revision Committee, whose role is to lead the committee and work with the Synod Constitution Revision Committee Liaison.

**3. Synod Constitution Revision Committee**

The Synodical committee tasked with assisting congregations in the process of changing and updating their congregation constitutions.

**4. Synod Constitution Revision Committee Liaison**

A member of the Synod Constitution Revision Committee whose role is to work with assigned congregations to guide them through the revision process, review their constitutions and grant preliminary approval, and to ultimately recommend their draft amended constitution to the Synod Council for approval.

**5. Model Constitution for Congregations**

A model constitution prepared by the ELCA churchwide organization, which all congregations must base their constitutions on. The model constitution includes required and non-required provisions. Required provisions must be included in every congregation of the ELCA's constitution. Non-required provisions may be used by a congregation by their discretion. The Model Constitution for Congregations is updated every three years.

**6. Synod Guiding Documents**

Various checklists, instructions, and guidelines congregations should utilize while updating or changing their constitutions.

## **7. Simple Update**

A process for updating a constitution whereby a congregation simply wants to update their current constitution to reflect changes to the model constitution. The simple update process is only for updated constitutions that change or update their current constitution to reflect required and non-required provisions of the Model Constitution for Congregations. If any other changes or edits are made, a congregation must follow the Expanded Update process. The Simple Update process utilizes chapter 16 section 4 of the Model Constitution for Congregations that allows a congregation to bring their constitution up to date with a simple majority vote, rather than an approval vote followed by a two-thirds majority ratification.

## **8. Expanded Update**

A process for updating a constitution whereby the congregation decides to include or change provisions other than the required provisions of the Model Constitution for Congregations. If non-required provisions are included but have been changed from their form in the Model Constitution for Congregations, they must be approved using the expanded update. This process requires a congregation vote of approval (majority vote) and then a two-thirds majority vote at the next regular meeting to ratify.

## **9. Amended Constitution Draft**

A copy of the most recent version of a church's constitution used to make changes and additions to reflect the most recent Model Constitution for Congregations as well as other changes the congregation may want to make.

## **10. Current Constitution**

The current constitution of a congregation which serves as their governing document.

## **11. Required Provisions**

Provisions with asterisks in the Model Constitution for Congregations that all ELCA congregations must include, word for word, in their constitution. The only edits allowed for required provisions are when a congregation needs to insert their own name or the name of their synod at specific points in the required provisions.

## **12. Non-required Provisions**

Provisions in the model constitution without asterisks which a congregation may or may not include in their constitution. Unlike required provisions, non-required provisions can be slightly altered to fit the needs of the congregation, but may not conflict with required provisions.

### **13. Liaison Report**

Also known as form 1.A, a report summarizing the liaison's review of a congregations constitution.

### **14. Mandatory Corrections**

Recommendations appearing in the Liaison's report (Form 1.A) that must be changed in the draft amended constitution, for the constitution to receive Synod Approval later on in the process.

### **15. Suggested Corrections**

Recommendations appearing in the Liaison's report which do not need to be addressed for the constitution to receive preliminary approval, but likely should be addressed and changed in an amended constitution draft. They likely help clarify language, address formatting, or inform in some other way the nature of the constitution.

### **16. Pre-Approval**

A designated granted to a congregation's amended constitution draft given by the Liaison. If the draft is pre-approved, that basically ensures that it will be approved by the synod council once the draft has been approved and ratified by the congregation.

### **17. Synod Revision Committee Chair**

The chair of the Synod Constitution Revision Committee. Oversees the work of the members and serves as a liaison to the Synod staff and council.

### **18. Special meeting of the Congregation**

A meeting of the congregation that is separate from a regular meeting of the congregation. During a special meeting, only one topic of business is allowed to be transacted. For the purpose of this process, a special meeting is called to approve an amended constitution draft, a simple majority is needed to approve. If the Simple Update process is followed, the draft can be submitted to the Liaison. If the Expanded Update process was used, the amended constitution draft must be ratified by two-thirds majority at the next regular meeting of the congregation.

### **19. Proposal of Recommendations**

A document given to the congregation at least thirty days before the meeting for approval of an amended constitution draft. This document explains the changes recommended by the Congregation Constitution Revision Committee.

## **20. Ratification**

If the expanded update process was followed, ratification is necessary to send the constitution to the Synod Council for approval. Ratification must happen at the next regular meeting of a congregation after approval, and requires a two-thirds majority vote.

## **21. Synod Council**

The governing board of the Synod, who determines if an approved and ratified amended constitution can be approved. If the simple update process was followed, the synod council does not need to approve the amended constitution.