

The two types of provisions are identified in the following way:
Constitutional provisions are printed in **bold** type
Bylaws are printed in regular type

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS ST. STEPHEN'S WOMEN OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

ARTICLE I MEMBERSHIP AND NAME

Section 1. Membership

The congregational unit of St. Stephen's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Lexington, South Carolina, shall be a member of the Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, HEREINAFTER designated as "Women of the ELCA."

Section 2. Name

The name of this congregational unit shall be St. Stephen's Evangelical Lutheran Church Unit of Women of the ELCA, HEREINAFTER designated as "the unit".

ARTICLE II STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Section 1. Purpose

As a community of women, created in the image of God, called to discipleship in Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves to grow in faith, affirm our gifts, support one another in our callings, engage in ministry and action, and promote healing and wholeness in the church, the society, and the world.

Section 2. Commitment

To accomplish the purpose of the Women of the ELCA, women in this unit shall commit themselves to:

- a. Come together for prayer, study, support and action;
- b. Participate in the ministry of the Women of the ELCA beyond the congregation;
- c. Support financially the total program of the Women of the ELCA; and
- d. Designate leadership that shall be in communication with the synodical and churchwide women's organization.

ARTICLE III PARTICIPATION

Section 1. Composition

This unit shall be composed of those women who participate in the activities that indicate a commitment to the purpose of the Women of the ELCA.

Section 2. Participation

Participation in this unit shall be open to all women in the congregation who subscribe to this purpose.

Section 3. Congregational Membership

Women elected to leadership in this unit and elected delegates to a convention of the Synodical Women's Organization shall be voting members of this congregation unit of the ELCA.

Section 4. Circles

The membership shall be divided into circles, each having approximately an equal number of members, insofar as possible.

- a. Each circle shall have a leader to serve as chairperson and any other officers and sub-chairpersons deemed necessary.
- b. Each circle leader shall serve on the unit's Executive Board.

ARTICLE IV RELATIONSHIPS

Section 1 Congregation

This unit shall participate in the life and work of St. Stephen's Evangelical Lutheran Church and furnish a report to the annual meeting. It may report to the congregational council.

Section 2. Conference

This unit shall participate in activities within the Saxe Gotha conference.

Section 3. Synodical Women's Organization ("SWO")

In an interdependent partnership, this unit shall participate in the convention of the SWO by:

Item 1. Electing two (2) delegates and an alternate delegate to represent the unit.

Item 2. Cooperating in the process for nomination of officers and board members of the SWO.

Section 4. Churchwide Women's Organization ("CWO").

Item 1. This unit shall participate in the process for nomination of delegates to the Triennial Convention.

Item 2. This unit shall participate in the process for nominations of officers and board members of the CWO.

ARTICLE V MEETINGS

Section 1. Program

Women of this unit shall come together regularly for prayer, study, support, and action.

Section 2. Annual Meeting and Business Meeting

There shall be at least one annual meeting. Transaction of business such as receiving reports, projecting plans, electing leadership, and adopting an annual budget will be held in September.

ARTICLE VI LEADERSHIP

Section 1. Officers

This unit shall have a President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer elected for a term of two years with one re-election. The immediate Past President shall be an ex-officio member of the Executive Board.

Item 1. Should a vacancy occur in any of the four officers (excluding Past President) or committee chairpersons, the Executive Board of this unit shall fill the same until the next annual meeting. The elected member shall serve for the remainder of the unexpired term.

Section 2. Duties of the Officers

Item 1. The President shall:

- a. Guide the total work of the unit.
 1. Preside at all Executive Board meetings, annual meetings, and special meetings.
 2. Coordinate and counsel committees and assist with their functioning.
 3. Serve as ex-officio member of all committees, except the Nominating Committee.
 4. Shall appoint, with advice of the Executive Board, a budget committee of at least three (3) persons including the Treasurer.
- b. Serve as primary contact person and communicator for the Women of the ELCA, (CWO, SWO, and conference).
 1. Relate the program and work of the unit with the Women of the ELCA and vice-versa.
 2. Relate current information regarding CWO, SWO, and conference activities to unit members.
 3. Participate in Women of the ELCA training sessions and events.

Item 2. The Vice President shall:

- a. Assume duties and powers of President when necessary.
- b. Carry out assignments from the President.

Item 3. The Secretary shall:

- a. Keep records of proceedings of the Executive Board meetings.
- b. Provide written announcements for the President.
- c. Handle correspondence.
- d. Provide names and addresses to the leaders of each congregational unit.

Item 4. The Treasurer shall:

- a. Receive and disburse funds of the unit.
- b. Maintain financial records.
 - 1. Make regular reports to the Executive Board, including a written annual report.
 - i. Interpret avenues of giving to and through the Women of the ELCA.
 - ii. Advocate regular and special offerings including Joy and Thank offerings at WELCA events.
 - iii. Transmit offering regularly to the Women of the ELCA.

Item 5. The Past President shall:

- a. Act as a mentor to the current President.
- b. Serve as a resource person to all officers and or committee chairpersons.

Section 3. The Executive Board shall be composed of the officers, the chairperson from each committee and the circle leaders. The Pastors of the congregation may counsel with the Executive Board and its committees. The duties of the Executive Board shall be:

Item 1. Provide for the general programs for the women of the congregation in fulfillment of the purpose of the Women of the ELCA.

- a. Identify the needs and interests of the women of the congregation.
- b. Develop goals, integrating growth, community, and action program areas, and aims.
- c. Assign goals to committees and task forces for implementation.
- d. Select appropriate resources to include the Women of the ELCA resources.
- e. Provide for regular worship and offering opportunities.
- f. Circulate communication from the local conference, state, and national Women of the ELCA.
- g. Participate in leadership development opportunities.
- h. Provide for selection of delegates to SWO convention and nominations for conference, SWO and CWO leadership.

Section 4. Committees shall be established by the Executive Board to fulfill the purpose of the Women of the ELCA.

Item 1. Committee For Action

To demonstrate how we respond to God's love and to establish women to act upon their faith in all areas of life, to include responsibility for missions and projects which serve the church, the community, local, and worldwide.

Item 2. Committee For Community

To establish support groups and provide other occasions which enable each woman to value herself and one another as created in God's image and redeemed through Christ; and to build up and celebrate relationships which are global, diverse, and interdependent.

Item 3. Committee For Growth

To provide through small groups and congregation-wide events and activities a variety of learning experiences, which strengthen each woman, develop her potential, and equip her for ministry. To include responsibility for programs, Bible Study, Lutheran Women Today magazine promotion, missionary and current Women of the ELCA emphasis, and other activities which undergird Christian growth.

Item 4. Other committees and task forces shall be established as needed.

**ARTICLE VII
PLANNING**

Section 1. Program Areas and Aims

To engage in planning, giving attention to the program areas and aims established by the Women of the ELCA.

**ARTICLE VIII
NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS**

Section 1. Nominating Committee

There shall be a nominating committee of at least three persons appointed by the President with the advice of the Executive Board, no later than July 1 of the election year, to present a slate of nominees for all officers.

Section 2. Elections

All elections shall be for the term of two years with one re-election. Elections will be held at the fall business meeting in September for the next year.

Sections 3. Terms

Officers, committee chairpersons, and circle leaders shall assume office January 1st of the year following election but may assume transitional responsibilities following their election.

Section 4. Conventions

Two delegates and an alternate for the convention of the SWO shall be elected by the Executive Board.

Section 5. Circle Leaders and Standing Committee Members

The circle leaders and standing committee members for each circle shall be selected by the circle leader from its membership.

**ARTICLE IX
FINANCE****Section 1. Fiscal Year**

The fiscal year and the budget year shall be January 1 through December 31.

Section 2. Administration

The Executive Board shall develop and administer its own financial plan or budget which shall reflect support for programs of the Women of the ELCA.

Section 3. Annual Budget

- a. The annual budget shall include the working program and operating costs and reflect the interdependent relationship with the synodical women's organization and the churchwide women's organization.
- b. The proposed annual budget shall be presented to the membership for information prior to being submitted for adoption at the annual business meeting.

Section 4. Transmittal

Funds shall be promptly transmitted regularly in accordance with established procedures.

Section 5. Reports

Annual financial reports shall be provided to all participants.

Section. 6. Financial Accountability

An annual accounting compilation of financial records shall be conducted by a financial review committee to coincide with the election fiscal year.

**ARTICLE X
DISSOLUTION CLAUSE**

In the event of the dissolution of the congregational unit, any surplus property remaining after payment of its debts shall be disposed of by transfer to the churchwide women's organization or its successor; provided that said organization is, at the time of dissolution, a qualified organization as described in the section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 or comparable

provisions and if not, to St. Stephen's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Lexington, South Carolina.

ARTICLE XI BYLAWS AND AMENDMENTS

Section 1. Constitution, Bylaws and Amendments

This constitution or bylaws may be amended at any regular meeting or special meeting by a two-thirds vote of the women present and voting; providing the proposed amendment has been publicized in written communication through newsletter, church bulletin or other electronic communications at least thirty (30) days prior to the vote. The proposed amendments must be consistent with the Women of the ELCA's purpose.

The Constitution and Bylaws of St Stephen's Evangelical Lutheran Church were adopted by a majority vote of members present at the annual business meeting on September 12, 2023 and replace any previous versions of this document.