

Chapter 12.

CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY

12.10. DESCRIPTION AND AUTHORITY OF THE CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY

12.11. The Churchwide Assembly shall be the highest legislative authority of the churchwide organization and shall deal with all matters which are necessary in pursuit of the purposes and functions of this church. The powers of the Churchwide Assembly are limited only by the provisions of the Articles of Incorporation, this constitution and bylaws, and the assembly's own resolutions.

12.12. Any matter for which adoption by a vote of two-thirds of those voting in a prior Churchwide Assembly was required by the constitution or bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall require a two-thirds vote to be amended or repealed by a subsequent Churchwide Assembly.

12.12.01. A social statement of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be developed pursuant to a policy approved by the Church Council, following consultation with the Conference of Bishops. The text of a proposed social statement shall be reviewed by the Conference of Bishops and approved and recommended to the assembly by the Church Council. A proposed social statement shall require for adoption a vote of two-thirds of those voting members present and voting in a Churchwide Assembly.

12.20. DUTIES OF THE CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY

12.21. The Churchwide Assembly shall:

- a. Review the work of the churchwide officers, and for this purpose require and receive reports from them and act on business proposed by them.**
- b. Review the work of the churchwide units, and for this purpose require and receive reports from them and act on business proposed by them.**
- c. Receive and consider proposals from synod assemblies.**
- d. Establish churchwide policy.**
- e. Adopt a budget for the churchwide organization.**
- f. Elect officers, board members, and other persons as provided in the constitution or bylaws.**
- g. Establish churchwide units to carry out the functions of the churchwide organization.**
- h. Have the sole authority to amend the constitution and bylaws.**
- i. Fulfill other functions as required in the constitution and bylaws.**
- j. Conduct such other business as necessary to further the purposes and functions of the churchwide organization.**

12.30. MEETINGS OF THE CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY

12.31. The assembly shall meet triennially. Special meetings may be called by a two-thirds vote of the Church Council. The purpose for a special meeting shall be stated in the notice.

12.31.01. The time and place of the Churchwide Assembly shall be determined by the Church Council. The time and place for the next regular assembly normally shall be announced at the preceding assembly.

12.31.02. The secretary shall give notice of the time and place of each regular assembly by publication thereof at least 60 days in advance on this church's website and in this church's periodical. The secretary shall give written notice of a special assembly to the bishop of each synod upon the issuance of a call thereof and shall publish the same on this church's website and in this church's periodical at least 30 days in advance of the special assembly. Notice shall be provided to all voting members or voting members-elect not more than 30 days or less than 10 days in advance of any meeting. Notice may be provided electronically for voting members or voting members-elect who have provided email addresses, unless the voting member or voting member-elect has requested that written notice be mailed.

12.31.03. At least 20 days prior to an assembly the secretary shall prepare and distribute to each congregation and to the voting members-elect a pre-assembly report. Distribution to congregations may be accomplished by posting the report on the website of this church. Distribution to voting members-elect may be accomplished electronically to those who have provided email addresses. A written copy of the *Pre-Assembly Report* will be mailed to any voting member-elect who does not provide an email address and to any congregation or voting member-elect who requests a written copy.

12.31.04. The arrangements for agenda, program, and worship shall be under the supervision of the presiding bishop.

12.31.05. Physical arrangements for churchwide assemblies shall be made by the secretary or by an assembly manager working under the secretary's supervision. Such committees as may be necessary to facilitate the planning for and operation of the assembly may be established by the secretary in consultation with the presiding bishop.

12.31.06. The churchwide organization shall be responsible for the costs of the Churchwide Assembly, including reasonable costs for travel, housing, and board for voting and advisory members.

12.31.07. At least one-half of all persons elected as voting members must be present at a meeting to constitute a quorum for the legal conduct of business. If such a quorum is not present, those voting members present may adjourn

the meeting to another time and place, provided that only those persons eligible to vote at the original meeting may vote at the adjourned meeting.

12.31.08.

Proxy and absentee voting shall not be permitted at a Churchwide Assembly.

12.31.09.

MEMBERS OF THE CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY

12.41.

The voting members of the Churchwide Assembly shall be the voting members of this corporation. The requirements for voting members of the assembly and other members shall be specified in the bylaws.

12.41.10.

VOTING MEMBERS

12.41.11.

Each synod shall elect one voting member of the Churchwide Assembly for every 6,000 baptized members in the synod. In addition, each synod shall elect one voting member for every 50 congregations in the synod. The synod bishop, who is *ex officio* a member of the Churchwide Assembly, shall be included in the number of voting members so determined. Unless otherwise determined by the synod, the synod vice president shall serve as an *ex officio* member of the Churchwide Assembly and be included in the number of the synod's voting members. The voting members elected by each synod shall comply with the principles of organization, commitment to inclusiveness, and interdependence as specified in Chapter 5 of this Constitution. In addition, each synod shall elect one additional voting member who is a youth or young adult at the time of the election and one additional voting member who is a person of color or a person whose primary language is other than English. The Church Council may allocate up to 10 additional voting members among synods, but no single synod may be allocated more than two additional voting members. The secretary shall notify each synod of the number of assembly members it is to elect.

12.41.12.

The secretary of each synod shall submit to the secretary of this church at least nine months before each regular Churchwide Assembly a certified list of the voting members elected by the Synod Assembly. If a voting member elected by the Synod Assembly is unable to serve, the name of an eligible person chosen by the Synod Council shall be submitted by the secretary of the synod to the secretary of this church. If a vacancy occurs or exists within 30 days or less of the convening of the Churchwide Assembly or during the meeting of the Churchwide Assembly, the synod bishop may submit the name of an eligible person to the secretary of this church. The individual whose name is submitted to the secretary of this

church shall be registered and seated by the Credentials Committee as a voting member from the synod.

- 12.41.13.** Each voting member of the Churchwide Assembly shall be a voting member of a congregation of this church. Any such voting member (except a rostered minister described in 7.42. or 7.72.) shall cease to be a member of the assembly if no longer a voting member of a congregation of this church within the synod from which elected.
- 12.41.14.** Voting members elected through the process of 12.41.11. through 12.41.13. shall begin serving with the opening of a regular Churchwide Assembly and shall continue serving until voting members are seated at the next regular Churchwide Assembly.
- 12.41.15.** Except as defined in 12.41.16., employees of the churchwide organization, including those serving under call, appointment, employment agreement, or contract, shall not be eligible for election and service as voting members of the Churchwide Assembly.
- 12.41.16.** ***Ex Officio Members.*** The officers of the churchwide organization, the members of the Church Council, and the bishops of the synods shall serve as *ex officio* members of the Churchwide Assembly. Unless otherwise determined by a synod, the synod vice presidents shall also serve as *ex officio* members of the Churchwide Assembly. *Ex officio* members shall have voice and vote.
- 12.41.17.** ***Advisory Members.*** Executive directors of units of the churchwide organization, the executive for administration, and other persons from the churchwide organization designated by the presiding bishop shall serve as advisory members of the Churchwide Assembly. The Church Council also may designate other persons as advisory members of the Churchwide Assembly. Advisory members shall have voice but not vote.
- 12.41.18.** ***Other Non-Voting Members.*** Other categories of non-voting members may be established by the Churchwide Assembly.
- 12.41.A89.** *Presidents of the colleges, universities, and seminaries of this church, unless elected as voting members of the assembly, shall have voice but not vote.*
- 12.41.B07.** *Faculty Resource Persons. A representative of the faculty of each seminary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be appointed by the president of each seminary to serve as a seminary faculty resource person for each Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. In addition, a teaching theologian who is a member of a congregation of this church and who is teaching at a college or university of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America may be appointed by the steering committee of the Association of Teaching Theologians in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to serve as a faculty resource person. Faculty resource persons shall have voice, if so*

granted in the assembly's rules, but not vote in plenary sessions of the assembly. Travel, food, and housing costs for the faculty resource persons shall be an expense of the assembly. Other expenses will be the responsibility of the individual or sending institution.

12.41.C04. *Congregation Observers. Each congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America may register with the secretary of this church one congregation observer for the Churchwide Assembly prior to May 31 in the year of a Churchwide Assembly.*

a. Provision shall be made for such an individual to have reserved seating in the observers section of the plenary hall. Such congregation observers will receive a copy of the report of recommendations for assembly action and also materials distributed on the plenary floor to voting members, advisory members, and non-voting members during the assembly. Such observers shall have neither voice nor vote in plenary sessions of the assembly.

b. A registration fee shall be established by the secretary of this church for registration and related costs, including enabling observers to receive the same meals as are provided for voting members.

c. Transportation costs, housing, other meals, and related expenses shall be the responsibility of the registered observer or sending congregation.

12.50. COMMITTEES OF THE CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY

12.51. The Churchwide Assembly shall have a Reference and Counsel Committee, a Memorials Committee, and a Nominating Committee. The description of these committees shall be in the bylaws. The Churchwide Assembly may authorize such other committees as it deems necessary.

12.51.01. Reference and Counsel Committee. A Reference and Counsel Committee, appointed by the Church Council, shall review all proposed changes or additions to the constitution and bylaws and other items submitted that are not germane to items contained in the stated agenda of the assembly.

12.51.02. Memorials Committee. A Memorials Committee, appointed by the Church Council, shall review memorials from synod assemblies and make appropriate recommendations for assembly action.

12.51.03. Nominating Committee. A Nominating Committee, elected by the Churchwide Assembly, shall nominate at least one person for each position for which an election will be held by the Churchwide Assembly in accordance with Chapter 19 of this constitution.