

SOUTHWESTERN TEXAS SYNOD

BYLAWS

Adopted by Constituting Convention
July 24, 1987

CHAPTER ONE
Offices and Agent

1.01.

PRINCIPAL OFFICE: The principal office for the transaction of business of the Southwestern Texas Synod shall be located at Seguin, Guadalupe County, Texas.

1.02.

PLACE OF MEETING: Meetings of the Synod Council, all Commissions, Committees and Subcommittees shall be at the principal office of the Synod unless a different location is specified in the notice of the meeting.

1.03.

REGISTERED AGENT: The bishop shall be the registered agent for the Synod.

CHAPTER TWO
Synod Assembly

2.01.

SYNOD ASSEMBLY: A regular meeting of the Synod Assembly shall be held annually. Synod Council shall determine the time and place for each Assembly and prepare its proposed agenda and program.

2.02.

COMMITTEES: The Synod Council shall appoint such committees as may be necessary to provide for an efficient Synod Assembly meeting.

2.03.

REFERENCE AND COUNSEL: The bishop shall appoint a Committee on Reference and Counsel to provide such assistance to the bishop as may be desired during the course of the Assembly. Resolutions of a general character that are not germane to the pending question or report shall be given by the proposer to the committee which shall report thereon to the Synod Assembly with its recommendations. Other duties of the committee shall be (a) to recommend special orders for the hearing of a representative, (b) to grant or deny permission to distribute printed matter not issuing from the office of the secretary.

2.04.

FISCAL AMENDMENTS: At any Synod Assembly meeting, any proposal for expenditure or budget amendment not presented by the Synod Council shall contain a statement setting out the probable fiscal impact of such proposal, suggested source of any required additional funds, and shall be submitted to the Synod Council for review and recommendation.

2.05.

All proposed changes and additions to the constitution and bylaws of this synod shall be submitted to the Synod Council for review and recommendation to the Assembly.

2.06.

The membership of synodically authorized worshipping communities may elect voting members of the Synod Assembly, consistent with the requirements for congregations as expressed in †S7.21.

2.07.

(a) Any resolution, memorial or other main motion not germane to the matter before a regular meeting of the Synod Assembly or on the assembly agenda shall be submitted in writing, supported by the signatures of at least two voting members, to the secretary of their synod no later than 60 days before the beginning of the meeting of the Synod Assembly. Such matters shall be referred as required by the chapter to the Committee on Reference and Counsel or Synod Council, which shall report such matters and their recommendations thereon to the voting members of the Synod Assembly in writing at least 10 days before the beginning of the meeting of the Synod Assembly.

(b)

(c) Any Matter not submitted in advance as required by subsection (a) of this bylaw, but submitted at least 7 days before the beginning of the meeting of the Synod Assembly, may be considered or acted on by that meeting of the Synod Assembly only with:

- (1) the recommendation of the Synod Council;
- (2) the recommendation of the Committee on Reference and Counsel; or
- (3) a majority vote of the Synod Assembly.

(c) Any matter required by this bylaw to be submitted in advance that is not submitted at least 7 days prior to the beginning of the meeting of the Synod Assembly shall only be considered and acted upon by that meeting of the Synod Assembly where there is a substantial need to act on the matter without the opportunity for deliberation as contemplated by this bylaw, as determined by a 2/3 vote of the Synod Assembly.

CHAPTER THREE Synod Council

3.01.

SYNOD COUNCIL: The Synod Council shall consist of the bishop, vice-president, secretary and treasurer; one male and one female lay member from each conference; one ordained minister from each conference; one "youth" (a voting member of a congregation who has not reached the age of 18 at the time of election or appointment for service); and one "young adult" (a voting member of a congregation between the ages of 18 and 30 at the time of election or appointment for service.) Members of the Synod Council other than the officers of the synod and the youth member shall be nominated by the nominating committee from persons selected by the respective conferences. The bishop, in consultation with the vice-president, may appoint such Synod Council committees as may be needed for efficient operation.

3.01. A07

Administration and Finance Committee:

The Administration and Finance Committee shall be composed of the treasurer and 6 to 8 other members of the Synod Council appointed by the bishop in consultation with the vice president for two-year renewable terms. The chair of the Stewardship Resource Team shall serve as an advisory member of the committee. The committee shall have responsibility for:

- A. preparing and presenting a comprehensive budget to the Synod Council for its consideration and presentation to the Synod Assembly;
- B. monitoring the finances and administrative affairs of the synod, and reporting and making recommendations to the Synod Council regarding such matters;
- C. recommending expenditure authorizations for approval by the Synod Council;
- D. Such other responsibilities and tasks as may be assigned or referred to it by the Synod Council.

3.01. B07.

Audit Committee:

The Audit Committee shall be composed of three members appointed by the Administration and Finance Committee and approved by the Synod Council for two-year renewable terms. One member of the Audit Committee shall be a member of the Administration and Finance Committee, who shall serve as the chair

of the Audit Committee. The other members of the Audit Committee shall be members of congregations of the synod, other than members of the Synod Council or synod staff, chosen for their expertise in accounting, financial and related matters. The Audit Committee shall assist the Administration and Finance Committee and the Synod Council in fulfilling oversight of the synod's accounting and financial reporting, internal control systems, and audit functions. The responsibilities of the Audit Committee shall be specified in a charter recommended by the Audit Committee, reviewed by the Administration and Finance Committee, and approved by the Synod Council.

3.01. C07.

Legal, Constitutional and Roster Review Committee:

The Legal, Constitutional and Roster Review Committee shall be composed of the secretary and 4 to 6 other members of the Synod Council appointed by the bishop in consultation with the vice president for two-year renewable terms. The chair of the Committee of Deans shall serve as an advisory member of the committee. The committee shall have responsibility for:

- A. providing for an annual review of the official rosters of the synod;
- B. reviewing and making recommendations to the Synod Council regarding:
 - a. requested or recommended changes to the rosters;
 - b. issuance of letters of call on behalf of the synod;
 - c. proposed amendments to the constitution, bylaws and continuing resolutions of the synod;
 - d. proposed constitutions or amendments to the constitutions of congregations, conferences, agencies, or institutions of the synod;
- C. monitoring the legal affairs of the synod, and reporting and making recommendations to the Synod Council regarding such matters; and
- D. such other responsibilities and tasks as may be assigned or referred to it by the Synod Council.

3.01. D07.

Program and Evaluation Committee:

The Program and Evaluation Committee shall be composed of the vice president and 6 to 8 other members of the Synod Council appointed by the bishop in consultation with the vice president for two-year renewable terms. The chairs of the synod commissions serve as advisory members of the committee. The committee shall have responsibility for:

- A. monitoring the programs and services of the synod to assure that its purposes, policies, and objectives are being fulfilled, and making recommendations to the Synod Council regarding the programs and services of the synod;
- B. reviewing and making recommendations to the Synod Council on existing or proposed synod policies, programs and strategies in light of synod goals and priorities;
- C. providing for ongoing evaluation of the structure of the synod, making recommendations related thereto to the Synod Council; and
- D. such other responsibilities and tasks as may be assigned or referred to it by the Synod Council.

3.02.

TERM OF OFFICE: The bishop, vice-president, secretary and treasurer shall be members of the Synod Council for so long as they hold their respective offices. Lay and ordained minister members shall serve four years and shall be ineligible for consecutive reelection. A member elected to fill an unexpired vacant term of less than one-half the regular term shall be eligible for reelection.

3.02.1.

Notwithstanding anything in these bylaws to the contrary, terms of office for the officers of this synod elected at the 1995 Synod Assembly shall be amended by adding one year to the term of office of the vice president, thereby causing that term to end in the year 2000, and by reducing by one year the terms of office of the secretary and treasurer, thereby causing these terms to end in the year 1998. The provisions of this bylaw shall expire September 1, 2000.

3.02.2.

Notwithstanding anything in these bylaws to the contrary, members elected to the Synod Council beginning in 1996 shall serve a four-year term, contingent upon approval and ratification of the amendment to S10.01.b. of the Synod Constitution presented to the 1996 Synod Assembly. In the event such amendment is not adopted and ratified on or before August 31, 1999, such persons shall serve a three-year term. This bylaw shall expire on September 1, 2002.

3.03.

YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT TERMS: The youth member shall serve a two-year term, must not have reached the age of 18 at the time of election or appointment for service, and shall be ineligible for reelection as a youth member. The young adult member shall serve a four-year term; be between the ages of 18 and 30 at the time of election or appointment for service, and shall be ineligible for reelection.

3.04.

VACANCIES: Vacancies in membership shall be filled by election to the unexpired term by the conference involved.

3.04. A08

The dean of the conference may appoint a qualified person to serve as a voting member of the synod council on an interim basis until a vacancy is filled by election by the conference.

3.05.

EVALUATION: The Synod Council shall determine its goals, procedures and long range planning, and shall develop a routine for self-evaluation to determine progress toward its goals and the establishment of new goals.

3.05. A94. Repealed May, 2007

3.06.

COMMISSION REPORT: The Synod Council shall receive reports from the commissions on their program goals and evaluate their performance.

3.07.

QUORUM: Fifteen voting members of the Synod Council shall constitute a quorum for conducting official business.

3.08.

COMMISSIONS: In addition to the program goals and ministries assigned to the commissions in the bylaws of this synod, the Synod Council may assign additional program goals and ministries to the commissions.

3.09.

SYNOD COUNCIL MEETINGS: The Synod Council shall meet at least two times each year.

3.10.

Expenditure Authorizations: In establishing expenditure authorizations as provided for in S15.13, the Synod Council may:

- A. re-allocate funding for expenditures from one line item or group of line items to another line item or group of line items within the budget, provided that the total expenditure authorizations do not exceed the total expenditures authorized in the budget; and
- B. by a two-thirds vote, authorize expenditures totaling not more than 5% in excess of the total expenditures authorized in the budget, with funding of such expenditures to be provided from unbudgeted income, unrestricted reserves, or other sources determined by the Synod Council.

CHAPTER FOUR
Committees, Commissions, and
Regional Coordinating Council

4.01.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE: The Executive Committee shall be composed of the elected Synod officers and three other members of the Synod Council elected by the Synod Council shall administer the directives of the Synod Council. The vice president shall chair this committee. In addition to the other responsibilities assigned to it by the constitution, bylaws or continuing resolutions of the synod, the Executive Committee shall:

- a. administer the directives of the Synod Council;
- b. assist the bishop in providing coordinated, strategic planning for the work of the synod;
- c. recommend persons to fill vacancies in elected positions to be filled by the Synod Council;
- d. provide advice and counsel for the officers and synod staff; and
- e. review the work of the officers and synod professional staff.

4.02.

CONSULTATION COMMITTEE: There shall be a Synod Consultation Committee consisting of 8 persons, of whom half shall be ordained ministers and half shall be laypersons, who shall each be elected by the Synod Assembly for a term of 6 years without consecutive reelection. The functions, duties and procedures of this committee shall be as set out in Chapter 20 of the Constitution of the ELCA.

4.02.1.

Notwithstanding anything in these bylaws to be contrary, members of the Consultation Committee whose terms of office expire in 1997 shall have their terms of office extended by one year so that the terms of office end in 1998. Those whose terms of office expire in 1999 shall have their terms of office extended by one year so that the terms of office end in 2000. Those whose terms of office expire in 2001 shall have their terms of office extended by one year so that the terms of office end in 2002. The provisions of this bylaw shall expire September 1, 2002.

4.03.

DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE: There shall be a Synod Committee on Discipline composed of 12 persons, of whom 6 shall be ordained ministers and 6 shall be laypersons elected by the Synod Assembly for a term of 6 years without consecutive reelection. The function, duties and procedures of this committee shall be as set out in Chapter 20 of the Constitution of the ELCA.

4.03.1.

Notwithstanding anything in these bylaws to the contrary, members of the Discipline Committee whose terms of office expire in 1997 shall have their terms of office extended by one year so that the terms of office end in 1998. Those whose terms of office expire in 1999 shall have their terms of office extended by one year so that the terms of office end in 2000. Those whose terms of office expire in 2001 shall have their terms of office extended by on year so that the terms of office end in 2002. The provisions of this bylaw shall expire September 1, 2002.

4.04.

MUTUAL MINISTRY COMMITTEE: There shall be a Mutual Ministry Committee to provide counsel and support to the bishop and the synod staff. The Committee shall have 3 members who shall serve one-year terms and may be reelected. The members shall elect one of their number as presiding officer. Deliberations of this Committee may, in its sole discretion, be confidential.

4.05.

COMMITTEE OF DEANS: The deans of the conferences shall constitute the Committee of Deans and shall select their own presiding officer. The Committee of Deans will assist the bishop in developing and maintaining the synod's roster of ordained and lay ministers for the Synod Council and in other duties as may be assigned by the Synod Council or the bishop.

4.05. A94.

The Committee of Deans shall meet at least two times each year. Additional meetings may be held as necessary.

4.05. B94.

In assisting the bishop in the maintenance of the rosters of this synod, the committee shall make recommendations to the Synod Council regarding the status of persons not under call.

4.07.

COMMISSIONS: There shall be four commissions. The Synod Assembly shall elect a chairperson of each commission to serve a four-year term. The chairperson shall be ineligible for consecutive reelection. The chairperson shall meet with and advise the Synod Assembly and Synod Council.

- A. **MEETINGS:** Each commission shall hold at least two regular meetings each year and special meetings as may be required. The chairperson shall give ten days notice of all meetings.
- B. **EVALUATION:** Each commission shall determine its goals, procedures and long range planning as well as a routine for self-evaluation regarding its progress toward these goals and the establishment of new goals. It shall develop a manual that outlines the goals, procedures, self-evaluation and long range planning for distribution to its members.
- C. **REPORTS:** Each commission shall make a full report of its activities to the Synod Assembly and Synod Council.
- D. **COMMISSIONS AND THEIR COMMITTEES:** The members of commissions, their committees, and committee chairpersons shall be appointed by the Synod Council. Terms of office shall be two years except that the terms of office for those on the Candidacy Committee shall be three years. All appointed members may serve no more than 2 successive terms.
- E. **ADDITIONAL MEMBERS:** The Synod Council may appoint up to three additional members to each commission in order to meet goals for representation or other needs of the synod or commission.

4.08.

COMMISSION FOR CONGREGATIONAL LIFE: There shall be a Commission for Congregational Life.

- A. The purpose of this commission shall be to provide support to congregations as they carry out ministry.
- B. There shall be a synod Youth Committee within this commission.
- C. The chairperson of the commission may appoint qualified persons to ad hoc commission task groups to assist in meeting the commission's purpose.

- D. The commission shall relate to the synodical organizations for women and men and shall receive reports from them at least annually. The commission shall relate programmatically to any ELCA camping organization in the territory of the synod.
- E. The membership of the commission shall be composed of the chair and from three to ten persons.

4.09.

COMMISSION FOR PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP: There shall be a Commission for Professional Leadership.

- A. The function and purpose of this commission shall be to recruit, endorse, support and approve prospective candidates for the roster of ordained ministers, associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers and to provide a system of support and ministry to those on the rosters.
- B. The commission shall have the following committees: Committee on Leadership Support; Committee on Candidacy; and Invitation to Service Committee.
- C. The Synod Council shall appoint eight persons to serve on the Committee on Candidacy; six persons to serve on the Committee on Leadership Support; six persons to serve on the Invitation to Service Committee.
- D. Members of the Committee on Candidacy, plus the bishop, shall examine the qualifications of candidates for ordination or for reception from other Lutheran bodies and shall examine the qualifications of candidates for commissioning as associates in ministry or for consecration as deaconesses or diaconal ministers and present recommendations concerning such applicants.
- E. The members of the commission shall be composed of (a) the commission chairperson, (b) the chairpersons of the three commission committees, and (c) one additional representative of each of the three commission committees selected by the respective committee. A majority of the commission, including the chairperson, shall be ordained ministers.

4.10.

COMMISSION FOR MISSION: There shall be a Commission for Mission.

- A. The function and purpose of this commission shall be to support the mission of existing congregations, help develop new ministries, be an advocate for inclusivity and ecumenicity in ministry, and foster Hispanic ministry throughout this synod and promote the global mission of the church.
- B. The commission shall have the following committees: Committee for outreach with one member from each conference and four members-at-large; committee for Mission Partners with one member from each conference, up to three members-at-large and the Mission Partners Coordinator; Committee on Inclusivity/Multicultural Ministries with not less than 4 nor more than 6 members; Committee on Ecumenism with not less than 4 nor more than 6 members; Committee on Global Mission with not less than 4 nor more than 6 members and Committee on Hispanic Ministries with not less than 6 nor more than 10 members.
- C. The membership of the commission shall be composed of (a) the chairperson, (b) a representative from each of the commission committees.

4.11.

COMMISSION FOR COMMUNICATIONS: There shall be a Commission for Communications.

- A. The function and purpose of this commission shall be to develop an overall communication strategy for the synod and to recommend policies for its implementation.

- B. The Synod Council shall appoint one member from each conference and 2 members at large to serve on the commission for two year terms.
- C.
- D. The chairperson of the commission may appoint temporary committees as required to perform the function and purpose of the commission.

E.
Bylaw 4.12

Hispanic Lutheran Coalition Council-Southwestern Texas Synod. There shall be a Hispanic Lutheran Coalition Council-Southwestern Texas Synod.

- A. The purpose of the coalition council shall be to serve as the focal point and coordinating body of the synod's ministry with and among Hispanic persons.
- B. The coalition will assist the synod in developing policies and practices related to its responsibilities by:
 - a. reviewing and monitoring the synod's programs and plans as they relate to ministry with and among Hispanic persons;
 - b. developing and recommending strategies, policies and procedures to further goals related to its responsibilities, and assisting in their implementation;
 - c. carrying out responsibilities assigned to it by the Synod Council related to its purpose; and
 - d. reporting on its activities to the Synod Council.
- C. The Synod Council shall appoint one person from each conference and such additional members at large as it may deem reasonable and necessary to serve on the coalition council for two-year terms. Members of the coalition council may serve successive terms without limitation.
- D. The Synod Council shall appoint a convener of the coalition council for a one-year term. The convener may serve successive terms without limitation. The convener shall: serve as the convener of the coalition council; serve as the spokesperson of the coalition council to the Synod Council; serve as a liaison of the coalition council with other commissions and committees of the synod, with the coalition councils of other synods, and with other groups and persons involved in ministry with and among Hispanic persons; and provide for reports of the coalition council's work to the bishop and Synod Council.

CHAPTER FIVE
Conferences, Clusters, and Coalitions

5.01.

CONFERENCES: The territory of this synod shall be divided into six geographical conferences as follows: Austin Conference, Coastal Bend Conference, Hill Country Conference, San Antonio Conference, Rio Grande Valley Conference, and Victoria Conference. The Synod Council will assign all congregations to an appropriate conference.

5.02.

OFFICERS: Each conference shall elect one of its ordained ministers as Dean, who shall serve as liaison with the bishop's office. A conference may elect other officers as needed. Conference officers shall be elected for a two year term and shall be eligible for reelection but may serve only 2 successive terms.

5.02. A94.

The dean of each conference shall:

- a. At the request of the synod bishop, officiate at installations, dedications, anniversary observances, and similar events.

- b. Represent the bishop, on request, at ecumenical, inter-Lutheran or community events.
- c. Assist, at the request of the bishop, in the call process in congregations by
 - 1. meeting with the congregation or call committee to explain the synod call packet.
 - 2. consulting with the congregation to ensure that installation plans are coordinated through the synod office.
- d. Inform the bishop of conference pastoral or congregational needs, vacancies, and other concerns.
- e. Assist congregations seeking supply pastors.
- f. Assist the bishop, as necessary, in obtaining parochial reports and reports of persons on the rosters of this synod.
- g. Make written report to the Synod Assembly, outlining conference activities.
- h. Assist the conference in development of distinctive ministries and programs. The dean may recommend possible new ministries to the Outreach Committee and may recommend ministries or congregations in need of financial or other resources.
- i. Foster a sense of collegiality among persons on the rosters and congregations of the conference including visitation when possible, and provide regular communication with persons on the rosters and congregations of the conference.
- j. Be available to counsel conference clergy, associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers and congregations.

5.03.

CONFERENCE MEETINGS: Each conference shall meet at least once each year to conduct all necessary elections. Voting members to conference meetings shall be all ordained ministers under call, all associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers under call, all retired ordained ministers serving under at least a year's contract with a congregation in the conference or an agency recognized by this synod, and no more than 6 lay voting members from each congregation.

5.04.

CONFERENCE CONSTITUTIONS AND BENEVOLENCE PROJECTS: Conferences shall consult with the Synod Council and receive approval before implementing conference constitutions or benevolence projects.

5.05.

CLUSTERS: Each conference may subdivide into clusters for ministries, programs and support groups for ordained and lay rostered ministers.

5.06.

COALITIONS: Coalitions for special emphasis and ministries may be established by conferences with approval by the Synod Council.

CHAPTER SIX
Agencies and Institutions

6.01.

REPRESENTATION: This synod will provide for appropriate representation on boards of Lutheran and interchurch agencies relating to this synod through the Synod Council.

6.02.

REPORTING: These agencies and institutions shall report to the Synod Council and the Synod Assembly.

6.03.

PROGRAM OVERSIGHT: Programmatic oversight of these agencies and institutions may be assigned by the Synod Council to the appropriate commission.

CHAPTER SEVEN

General Provisions

7.01.

VALIDATION: Conference calls or mail ballots may be used to conduct the business of the Synod Council, commissions and commission committees, provided quorum requirements are met and actions are ratified at the next meeting of that group.

7.02.

INCLUSIVENESS: In implementing the directives of S6.04 of this Constitution in regard to assemblies, councils, committees, boards and other organizational units, the Synod Council shall ensure that where possible the representation of ordained ministers shall be both female and male.

7.03.

BEGINNING TERMS: Terms of officers, members of the Synod Council, conference officers, commission and committee chairpersons shall begin on the first day of September following election. Terms of commission and committee appointees shall begin on the same date.

7.04.

VOTING MEMBER(S): A minimum of one person from each conference shall be elected by the Synod Assembly as a voting member to the Churchwide Assembly. The vice president of the synod, by virtue of election to that office, shall be elected voting member of each Churchwide Assembly during his or her term of office. One elected voting member shall be reserved for a youth for "youth" (a voting member of a congregation who has not reached the age of 18 at the time of election or appointment for service); and one elected voting member shall be a "young adult" (a voting member of a congregation between the ages of 18 and 30 at the time of election or appointment for service)

7.05.

SUBSTITUTE VOTING MEMBER(S): When it becomes evident that an ordained minister or lay voting member elected by the Synod Assembly is unable to be in attendance prior to the afternoon session on the second day of a Churchwide Assembly and no elected alternate voting member is available, the bishop of this synod may appoint a substitute.

7.06.

LIMITATION: No person shall be eligible to serve at any one time in more than one of the following capacities: member of the Synod Council, commission chairperson or dean of a conference.

7.07.

NOTICES: Notices of all regular and special meetings of commissions, committees, and conferences shall be sent to the bishop.