

CONSTITUTION

AND

BYLAWS

British Columbia Synod Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

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	Page
Constitution	3
Bylaws	5
1. Mission	5
2. Membership.....	5
3. Congregations.....	6
4. Rostered Ministers – Ordained.....	7
5. Rostered Ministers – Diaconal	10
6. Conferences	10
7. Conventions	
A. Synod Conventions	11
B. National Church Conventions, Election of Delegates	13
8. Nominations and Elections.....	14
9. Officers.....	14
10. Synod Council	16
11. Financial Matters	17
12. Standing Committees	18
A. The Committee for Theological Education and Leadership.....	18
B. The Committee for Faith and Society	19
C. The Committee for Missions.....	19
D. The Committee for Stewardship.....	19
E. The Committee for Youth Ministry.....	20
F. The Committee for Communications	20
G. The Committee for Specialized Ministries.....	20
H. Examining Committee.....	21
I. The Committee for Campus Ministry.....	21
J. The Committee for Worship.....	21
13. Theological and Educational Institutions	
A. Seminary.....	22
B. Lutheran Campus Ministry.....	22
14. Auxiliaries	23
15. Synod Policies	23
16. Amendments.....	23
17. Synod Study Conference	23

CONSTITUTION

Article 1. Name

The name of this synod shall be the British Columbia Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (referred to herein as "this Synod").

Article 2. Purpose

As the regional expression of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (referred to herein as "this Church") and in faithfulness to the Lord of the Church, this Synod shall facilitate and advance the mission of this Church within the province of British Columbia. Guided and empowered by the Holy Spirit, it shall carry out this mission by shepherding its congregations and rostered ministers, and by engaging in other forms of ministry that proclaim God's Word and serve to bring reconciliation to the world.

Article 3. Confession of Faith

The Confession of Faith shall be that of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, as follows.

- Section 1. This Synod confesses the Triune God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – as the one true God. It proclaims the Father as Creator and Preserver, His Son Jesus Christ as Redeemer and Lord, and the Holy Spirit as Regenerator and Sanctifier.
- Section 2. This Synod confesses that the Gospel is the revelation of God's saving will and grace in Jesus Christ, which He imparts through Word and Sacrament. Through these means of grace the Holy Spirit creates believers and unites them with their Lord and with one another in the fellowship of the Holy Christian Church.
- Section 3. This Synod confesses the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God, through which God still speaks, and as the only source of the Church's doctrine and the authoritative standard for the faith and life of the Church.
- Section 4. This Synod subscribes the documents of the Book of Concord of 1580 as witnesses to the way in which the Holy Scriptures have been correctly understood and explained and confessed for the sake of the Gospel, namely:
- a. The Apostles', and Nicene, and the Athanasian Creeds as the chief confessions of the Christian faith;
 - b. The Unaltered Augsburg Confession as its basic formulation of Christian doctrine;
 - c. Luther's Small Catechism as a clear summary of Christian doctrine;
 - d. The Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Luther's Large Catechism, the Smalcald Articles with the Treatise, and the Formula of Concord as further witnesses to the Unaltered Augsburg Confession.

This article shall be unalterable.

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BYLAWS

BYLAW 1. Mission

Section 1. In seeking to achieve its mission, this Synod shall:

- a. organize, recognize, receive, release, and exclude congregations and approve or disapprove of relocation or merger of congregations;
- b. ordain or consecrate ministerial candidates and receive, nurture, support, and discipline rostered ministers;
- c. recruit, approve, supervise, and support ministerial candidates;
- d. co-operate with this Church to provide for theological education at Lutheran Theological Seminary, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, and elect two members to its Board of Governors;
- e. provide for higher education for the members of this Church and others and for ministry to persons engaged in higher education at universities and colleges on its territory;
- f. encourage congregational evangelism and works of mercy;
- g. encourage congregational programs for justice and service;
- h. maintain and support social and health care agencies and institutions in accordance with the standards adopted by the Church;
- i. co-operate with this Church and other organizations or groups in activities that promote justice and reconciliation, meet human need and alleviate suffering;
- j. interpret and support the nation-wide and worldwide work of the Church through effective co-operation with this Church;
- k. acknowledge the official auxiliaries as partners in carrying out the mission of the Church;
- l. participate in a provincial council of churches and similar co-operative, province-wide Christian movements that have been approved by this Church as adhering to sound principles;
- m. adjudicate appeals from congregational discipline in accord with the procedure in Bylaw 3, Section 9;
- n. administer this Synod as stipulated in the constitution and bylaws of this Church and this Synod;
- o. carry out such other ministries that may be identified by this Synod or by this Church;
- p. research and interpret current societal conditions and restate the church's mission in response to such changes;
- q. organize, recognize, adopt, support or discontinue special ministries of this Synod, depending on congregational support and appropriateness.

BYLAW 2. Membership

Section 1. The membership of this Synod consists of congregations and their baptized members who have applied for membership in this Synod and have been recognized by this Synod, as a

regional manifestation of this Church.

Section 2. Voting members shall consist of:

- a. one lay delegate from each congregation officially recognized by this Synod. Congregations having more than 100 baptized members may have one lay delegate for each additional 200 baptized members or major fraction thereof. Delegates shall cease to be members in good standing upon the termination of their membership in the congregation;
- b. ordained ministers on the roster of this Synod who are members in good standing of their respective congregations and not under suspension from office by the Bishop;
- c. diaconal ministers on the roster of this Synod who are members in good standing of their respective congregations and not under suspension from office by the Bishop;
- d. lay members of Synod Council who are members in good standing, who shall cease to be members in good standing upon removal from office in the manner described in these bylaws;
- e. one youth delegate from each Conference who is elected or appointed by his/her Conference and who is a member in good standing of a member congregation;
- f. ordained ministers of a church with which this Church has a full communion agreement and who are serving in this Synod under the provisions of that full communion agreement.

Section 3. This Synod at its organizational meeting shall recognize those congregations on its territory that are recognized by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada and certified to it by the secretary of this Church.

Section 4. A congregation and its baptized members seeking to be admitted into this Synod shall submit to the Bishop a formal application and a copy of the constitution and bylaws of the congregation which this Synod, prior to admitting such congregation and their baptized members, shall ascertain to be in harmony with the faith and polity of this Church. Every congregation that is recognized by this Synod shall have a constitution and bylaws that conform to the requirements of the Society Act of British Columbia and, in the judgement of the Synod Council, is in harmony with the constitution and bylaws of this Church and this Synod.

Section 5. A congregation and its baptized members may be suspended or excluded from this Church and this Synod by action of this Synod if the congregation persists in any of the following offences:

- a. turning aside from the faith confessed by this Church and this Synod as set forth in Article 3 of the constitution of this Synod;
- b. refusing or neglecting to exercise proper discipline over its members;
- c. wilfully violating or disregarding the constitution and bylaws or official actions of this Church and this Synod

The Bishop of this Synod shall counsel with any congregation where such offences exist. If necessary, the Bishop shall then admonish the congregation in writing. If the admonition is unheeded a representative committee composed of rostered ministers and laity shall be appointed by the Synod Council to investigate the congregation. Upon the recommendation of the committee, the Synod Council may suspend or exclude the congregation from this Church and this Synod.

Disciplinary action of the Synod Council may be appealed to the Court of Adjudication of this Church within thirty days of receiving notification of the action of the Synod Council.

The decision of the Court of Adjudication is final.

BYLAW 3. Congregations

- Section 1. Every congregation of this Synod shall choose a delegate or delegates to represent it at conventions of this Synod and at meetings of the conference to which the congregation is assigned. An alternate or alternates may act in the stead of the delegate or delegates in the event of their absence.
- Section 2. Congregations shall have the right to petition this Synod, according to procedures set forth in these bylaws.
- Section 3. When a pastor resigns, the congregational council shall receive the resignation, report it to the congregation, and notify the Bishop of this Synod.
- Section 4. The alignment of congregations in pastoral charges shall be subject to approval by the Synod Council.
- Section 5. The approval of this Church or a convention of this Synod or of Synod Council shall be required for the solicitation of funds from congregations for institutions, agencies, and causes of this Church.
- Section 6. In cases of strife and division in a congregation, the congregational council shall seek the advice of the Bishop of this Synod.
- Section 7. A congregation considering the severing of its relationship with this Church shall confer with the bishop of this synod before any formal steps are taken leading to such action. Subsequent to such consultation with the bishop, a motion to sever the relationship with this Church may be considered at a legally called and conducted meeting of the congregation and a two-thirds majority vote shall be required for approval of the motion. Written notices of the motion and the date and time of the congregational meeting shall be sent to the bishop of this synod by registered mail at least thirty days before the meeting. A decision to sever the relationship with this Church shall not be effective until it has been ratified by a two-thirds majority vote at a second legally called and conducted congregational meeting held at least ninety days after the first meeting. Notice of the date and time of this second meeting shall be sent to the bishop of this synod by registered mail at least ninety days before the meeting.
- Section 8. A congregation of this Synod that has ceased to exist, or whose membership has so diminished in numbers as to render it impossible or impractical for the congregation to function according to its constitution and bylaws, shall, after consultation with any remaining members, be deemed by this Synod to be defunct. The Synod Council shall appoint trustees, including where feasible former members of the congregation, who shall take charge and control of the property of said congregation to hold, manage, and convey the same on behalf of this Synod.
- Section 9. A lay member of any congregation may appeal to this Synod from the disciplinary action of the congregation. All such appeals must be made in writing to the Bishop within thirty days after the action has been taken. Copies of said appeal shall be transmitted by the appellant to the pastor and to the secretary of the congregation. The Bishop shall appoint a special committee to investigate the appeal. The decision of the committee shall be final and reported to the appropriate parties.
- Section 10. Members in this Synod shall cease to be in good standing upon the termination of their membership in this Synod.
- Section 11. The Bishop of this Synod, or the Bishop's designate, shall have the privilege of voice in each

congregation or ministry of this synod, including congregational meetings.

BYLAW 4. Rostered Ministers – Ordained

Section 1. To be eligible for ordination or acceptance onto the roster of ordained ministers of this Synod, a candidate must have accepted a call (which call might be subject to the candidate's ordination) and must have met one of the following standards:

- a. be a graduate of a recognized college or university and a theological seminary of this church and present satisfactory reports of regular and frequent contact with the Committee on Theological Education and Leadership and the Bishop of this Synod. In the case of an older candidate the requirements for graduation from a recognized college or university may be waived by the Committee on Theological Education and Leadership.
- b. if theological education was received at a seminary other than one of this Church, give evidence of graduation from an approved theological school and have fulfilled a year internship acceptable to the appropriate synodical authorities.
- c. have been a member of the clergy of another denomination and have undertaken additional theological preparation in a seminary of this church, or have passed a comprehensive examination prepared by the National church and administered by a synodical committee, which may also require the successful completion of an internship in a parish of this Church. Persons who have been ordained in the name of the Triune God through laying on of hands by another denomination, and have been approved by colloquy, shall be accepted into the roster of ordained ministers of this Church through a public rite that includes affirmation of the ordination vows of this Church.

Section 2. The synodical Examining Committee shall interview all candidates for ordination and all persons applying for acceptance on the roster of ordained ministers and shall ensure their:

- a. acceptance of and adherence to the Confession of Faith of this Church;
- b. fulfilment of academic requirements; and
- c. personal qualifications for carrying out the functions of ordained ministry.

Section 3. Continuance on the Roster of Ordained Ministers

In order to remain on the roster of ordained ministers of this Synod, each ordained minister, except those who are retired, disabled, on leave from call, or suspended from pastoral ministry, shall be in possession of a proper call from a congregation, a synod or this Church itself. Such a call may be for an indefinite or a specified length of time. Before issuing the call, the calling agency shall consult with the Bishop of this Synod.

Following the procedural guidelines found in the Constitution and Bylaws of this Church, the Synod Council shall subject an ordained minister to discipline and may suspend the minister or remove the minister from the roster for the following:

- a. preaching or teaching of doctrine in conflict with the confession of faith of this Church;
- b. conduct unbecoming an ordained minister;
- c. wilful disregard for or violation of the functions and standards established by this Church for the office of Word and Sacrament;
- d. wilful disregard of the constitution, administrative bylaws and enactments of this Church and of this Synod.

Section 4. Ordination of approved candidates shall normally take place in connection with a convention

of this Synod. The time and place of all ordinations shall be designated by the Bishop.

- Section 5. Every pastor shall preach the Word, administer the Sacraments, and conduct public worship in harmony with the faith and practices of this Church; shall baptize, confirm, and marry in accordance with the teaching of this Church and with the laws of the province; shall visit the sick and distressed and bury the dead; shall inculcate piety in individual and family life and provide pastoral leadership to all schools and auxiliary organizations of the congregation; shall install members of the congregational council and, with the council, administer discipline; shall seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel and strive to extend the Kingdom of God in the community, at home, and abroad; and shall encourage the members to be generous in support of the ministry of the congregation, this Synod, and this Church.
- Section 6. Every pastor shall keep accurate congregational membership records, including baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, and communicants, and shall submit a report of such statistics annually to the secretary of this Synod on forms provided by this Church. The records shall be kept in a separate book, which shall remain the property of the congregation.
- Section 7. When members of a congregation move, the pastor shall commend them to the pastoral care of the parish in which their new home is located.
- Section 8. Each congregation shall consult the Bishop of this Synod before taking any steps leading to the extending of a call to a prospective pastor.
- Section 9. Upon receiving a call to another ministry, the pastor shall consult with the Bishop and the chairperson of the congregational council before a decision is reached. The pastor shall inform the congregation and the Bishop of the decision on the call within thirty days of official notice. When a call has been accepted, the pastor shall terminate the ministry within two months unless an extension has been agreed upon by the pastor and the congregational council.
- Section 10. The regular call of a congregation when accepted by a pastor, or letter of appointment when accepted by another worker, shall constitute a relationship, which shall be terminated only for the following causes:
- a. resignation or the expiry of the term for which the person was called;
 - b. retirement of the pastor;
 - c. disqualification through discipline;
 - d. division of a pastoral charge;
 - e. physical or mental incapacity;
 - f. continued neglect of ministry;
 - g. inability to conduct the pastoral office satisfactorily in that parish in the view of local conditions, without reflection on the moral and spiritual character of the pastor.

In the last three contingencies, when such difficulties are made known, the Bishop may, following consultation with the conference dean, appoint an Advisory Committee of two ordained ministers and two lay members to investigate. Upon the request of the congregational council or the receipt of a petition signed by at least one-third of the voting members of the congregation, the Bishop shall appoint an Advisory Committee to investigate.

In case of alleged physical or mental disability, medical testimony shall be secured. When such incapacity is evident, the Bishop, on the advice of the Committee and with the concurrence of the congregational council, shall declare the pastorate vacant. Upon the restoration of such a pastor to health, the Bishop of this Synod shall take steps to enable the pastor to resume the ministry, either in the congregation last served or in another field of

labour.

In the case of alleged neglect of ministry or of local conditions which imperil the well-being of the congregation, all those concerned shall be heard, after which the Bishop of this Synod together with the Advisory Committee shall counsel with the pastor and the congregation on a proper course of action. Such counsel shall be offered out of Christian love and is not to be regarded as an act of discipline. After such counsel, if the problem has not been resolved, the congregation may terminate the call by majority vote. The Bishop of this Synod at any point in the foregoing proceedings, with the concurrence of the congregational council, may suspend the pastor from the functions of the ministry within the congregation, pending completion of the formal proceedings.

The foregoing procedure shall never be invoked when questions of doctrine or morality are involved, all such cases being treated as disciplinary matters.

Section 11. No ordained minister shall preach or perform any ministerial act within the parish of another pastor except at the latter's request or consent, or visit or perform ministerial acts in a time of a pastoral vacancy except by invitation of its congregational council.

Section 12. During a pastoral vacancy, an interim pastor shall be selected by the congregational council after consultation with the Bishop. The interim pastor shall have the responsibility of a regularly called pastor. All interim and supply pastors shall refrain from exerting influence in the call process of the congregation.

Section 13. All ordained ministers serving under call shall attend all conventions of this Synod, the annual study conference and the meetings of the conferences to which they belong.

BYLAW 5. Rostered Ministers – Diaconal

Section 1. This Synod shall maintain a roster of lay diaconal ministers.

Section 2. To be eligible for consecration into the diaconal ministry and be on this Synod's roster of diaconal ministers, a candidate must have accepted a call in this Synod (which call may be subject to the candidate's consecration) and must have met the standards set forth in the candidacy manual of this Church.

Section 3. This Synod's Examining Committee, which shall interview all candidates for consecration and all persons applying for acceptance on the roster of lay diaconal ministers, shall ensure their:

- a. acceptance of and adherence to the Confession of Faith of this Church;
- b. fulfilment of academic requirements;
- c. personal qualifications for carrying out the functions of the diaconal ministry to which a call has been extended.

Section 4. Continuance on the Roster of Diaconal Ministers

In order to remain on the roster of diaconal ministers of this Synod, each consecrated minister, except those who are retired, disabled, on leave from call, or suspended from pastoral ministry, shall be in possession of a proper call from a congregation, a synod or this Church itself. Such a call may be for an indefinite or a specified length of time. Before issuing the call, the calling agency shall consult with the Bishop of this Synod.

Following the procedural guidelines found in the Constitution and Bylaws of this Church, the Bishop may subject the diaconal minister to discipline and may suspend that minister for the following reasons:

- a. teaching of doctrine in conflict with the Confession of Faith of this Church as

- expressed in the constitution of this Synod;
- b. conduct unbecoming an diaconal minister;
- c. wilful disregard of the constitution, administrative bylaws and enactments of this Church and of this Synod.

BYLAW 6. Conferences

- Section 1. This Synod may be divided into up to eight conferences as decided by this Synod in convention. Individual congregational membership within conferences shall be ratified by this Synod in convention.
- Section 2. The purpose of the conferences shall be to:
- a. encourage fellowship among rostered ministers and congregations;
 - b. arrange opportunities for the study of the Holy Scriptures and Christian doctrine;
 - c. assist this Synod in planning, promoting, and implementing the mission of the Church;
 - d. respond in consultation with this Synod to particular needs within its territory;
 - e. elect the required number of rostered ministers as delegates to the conventions of this church;
 - f. elect a nominee to represent the conference on Synod Council.
 - g. elect or appoint a confirmed youth between the ages of 14 and 21 years inclusive on the first full day of the convention who is a member in good standing of a congregation in that Conference as a voting delegate to the Synod Convention.
- Section 3. A conference may adopt for itself any rules and regulations not in conflict with the constitution and bylaws of the Synod.
- Section 4. Each conference shall meet at least once a year, at a time and place set by the conference, and in sufficient time to allow for the election of a nominee to the Synod Council on an election year. Each conference shall designate its own quorum.
- Section 5. Each conference shall have the right to petition this Synod according to procedures set forth in these bylaws.
- Section 6. Each conference shall elect from its membership a dean, a secretary, and at least two other persons, who shall constitute a Conference Council. Election shall be for a two-year term. The dean, who shall serve as chairperson, shall be an ordained minister.
- Section 7. The Conference Council shall fill any vacancies in its membership until the next meeting of the conference.
- Section 8. The dean of each conference shall make a written report to this Synod through the Bishop's report.
- Section 9. The deans of the conferences shall meet at least once a year with the Bishop for spiritual renewal and the discussion of programs, plans, and problems affecting conferences and this Synod. Except where otherwise provided in these bylaws, the function of such a meeting shall be consultative and advisory.
- Section 10. All members of congregations are encouraged to attend conference meetings. The voting membership shall be all rostered ministers on the territory of the conference and two lay delegates from each congregation. Congregations having more than 100 baptized members shall be entitled to an additional lay member for each additional 100 baptized members or major fraction thereof.

Section 11. The Bishop of this Synod or the Bishop's appointee shall attend the conference meetings.

Section 12. The dean of each conference shall carry out, as delegated by and on behalf of the Bishop, the call and placement of pastors and other ministers, first level intervention in cases of congregational distress, representation of this Synod at special congregational or regional events, and the articulation and promotion of this Synod's theology of mission and ministry.

BYLAW 7. Conventions

A. Synod Conventions

Section 1. The convention of this Synod shall be its highest legislative authority.

Section 2. The regular convention of this Synod shall normally be held either biennially between national conventions or annually at a time that is at least forty-five days before or forty-five days after the biennial convention of this church.

Section 3. Regular conventions shall be held annually or biennially as determined by a two-thirds majority vote of those present and voting at any regular convention. Regular conventions may or may not be primarily business conventions; however, business conventions shall be held at least biennially, between national conventions. For the purpose of satisfying the requirements of the B.C. Society Act, one meeting of the Synod Council annually shall include the annual general meeting of this Synod which meeting shall be held within six months of the end of the fiscal year. For purposes of this annual general meeting a voting member shall be any person who holds membership in a congregation of the Synod and a quorum shall be three persons. Furthermore, thirty days written notice of this annual general meeting shall be given to every member of the Synod Council and to each congregation of this Synod. In addition members of this Synod will be informed of such meeting by posting notice where each congregation and its members regularly meet.

Section 4. Special conventions for specified purposes may be called by the Bishop and shall be called by the Bishop at the request of two thirds of the Synod Council or by request of 10% of this Synod's congregations or by request of 10% of rostered ministers on the roster of this Synod who are in good standing and not under suspension from the office by the Bishop. Such requests for a special convention shall be in writing with accompanying signatures delivered to the address of this Synod and stating the purpose of such a general meeting. Such special conventions shall be convened within 21 days and to be held within 90 days of receiving the request in writing .

Section 5. The secretary shall publish the time and place of each regular convention at least six months in advance. The secretary shall give written notice of a special convention to each congregation and each rostered minister and shall publish the same at least thirty days prior to the opening date of the convention.

Section 6. A quorum at a convention shall be fifty voting delegates.

Section 7. The voting membership at a special convention shall be those who were seated in the preceding regular convention, provided that they have not been disqualified by termination of membership in the congregation they represented. Vacancies in this voting membership shall be filled by the parishes so represented as necessary.

Section 8. The national Bishop of this Church and such other official representatives of this Church as may be designated by the National Church Council shall have seat and voice in the conventions of this Synod. Like privileges shall be accorded to the chairpersons of synodical committees, in connection with their reports, to representatives of institutions and agencies related to or officially recognized by this Synod, to the presidents of the synodical units of the

official auxiliaries of this Church.

Section 9. Convening:

- a. The secretary shall give notice of the time and place of the convention, including registration costs, to all pastors and the chairperson of each congregation at least four months before the opening day of the convention.
- b. The Synod Council shall determine the amount of the registration for delegates to cover convention expenses.
- c. Arrangements for conventions shall be made by the officers, or by a committee named for that purpose by the Synod Council, acting in conjunction with a local committee.
- d. The Synod Council shall prepare the proposed agenda.
- e. The secretary shall make available a bulletin of reports to all voting members at least thirty days before each regular business convention.
- f. All arrangements for worship services or public meetings shall be made in consultation with the Bishop.

Section 10. Delegates:

- a. Each congregation shall submit the name(s) and address(es) of its delegate(s) to the secretary at least sixty days prior to the opening day of the convention.
- b. Each Conference shall submit the name and address of its youth delegate to the secretary at least sixty days prior to the opening day of the convention.
- c. Delegates to conventions of this Synod shall be paid travel costs at a rate to be determined by the Synod Council.
- d. Each congregation or employing agency shall pay the registration fee of its delegate(s). In the case of a pastor serving a multiple-congregation parish, such expenses shall be borne by the congregations pro rata on the basis of baptized membership.

Section 11. Procedure:

- a. During the first sitting of each regular business convention, the Bishop shall announce the appointment of the convention committees, as follows:
 - i. Committee on the Report of the Bishop;
 - ii. Committee of Reference and Counsel;
 - iii. Committee on Nominations;
 - iv. Committee on Minutes;
 - v. Committee on Registration and Attendance;
 - vi. Committee on Elections.
- b. The report of the Bishop to each regular business convention shall be referred to the Committee on the Report of the Bishop, which shall study it, make appropriate comments, and transmit to the convention the recommendations of the Bishop, together with any additional recommendations that it considers appropriate.
- c. Petitions from congregations and conferences shall be submitted to the secretary of this Synod prior to the convention for referral to the Committee of Reference and Counsel.
- d. The Committee of Reference and Counsel shall:
 - i. receive and study petitions submitted to the secretary by congregations and

- conferences, as well as those referred to it by the convention, a synodical committee, or a delegate, and report to the convention its recommendations, together with the original resolutions;
- ii. recommend special orders for the hearing of representatives;
- iii. grant or deny permission to distribute printed matter not issuing from the office of the secretary; and
- iv. give such assistance to the Bishop as this officer may desire in the course of the convention.
- e. All reports published in the bulletin of reports shall be received by the convention by virtue of that fact without vote.
- f. Votes shall be conducted with the delegates' use of green 'yes' and red 'no' voting cards according to the instructions of the Chair;
- g. Procedures enumerated in this section may be suspended during a convention by a two-thirds majority vote of the delegates present and voting.

B. National Church Conventions, Election of Delegates

Section 1. The (Synod) secretary of this Synod shall inform each of the conferences of the number of pastors to be elected to the national church convention.

Section 2. Rostered delegates and alternates shall be elected at least seven months before the national church convention, after which the (Synod) secretary of this Synod shall inform those parishes eligible to elect lay delegate(s). Lay delegates and alternates shall be elected at least four months before the convention.

BYLAW 8. Nominations and Elections

Section 1. At the first meeting following the regular business convention of this Synod, the Synod Council shall appoint a Committee on Nominations consisting of six members.

Section 2. The Committee on Nominations shall invite the congregational councils, ordained ministers, diaconal ministers, and synodical committees to suggest names for the vacancies to be filled at each convention and for which the Committee on Nominations is to propose candidates.

Section 3. The Committee on Nominations shall nominate two persons for each position to be filled by election at a convention of this Synod except for the officers of this Synod and the three governors of the seminary nominated by the National Church Council. Additional nominations may be made from the floor for all elections for which the nominations are made by the Committee on Nominations.

Section 4. All elections shall be by ballot. In all elections, except for the officers of this Synod, a majority of the votes cast on any ballot shall elect.

Section 5. The election of Bishop, secretary, and vice-chairperson of this Synod shall proceed in this order, without oral nominations. If the first ballot does not result in election, it shall be considered a nominating ballot.

Section 6. The nomination of the treasurer shall be made by the Synod Council. Additional nominations may be made from the floor.

Section 7. On the first ballot for an officer, three-fourths of the votes cast shall be required for election. Thereafter only such votes as are cast for persons who have received votes on the first ballot shall be valid. On the second ballot, two-thirds of the votes cast shall be required for election. On the third ballot, the voting shall be limited to the four persons receiving the highest vote on the second ballot, and a majority of the votes cast shall elect.

Section 8. For all other elections, a majority of all votes cast constitutes election.

Section 9. The result of each ballot in every election shall be announced in detail to the convention.

BYLAW 9. Officers

Section 1. The officers of this Synod shall be the Bishop, vice-chairperson, secretary, and treasurer. The Bishop shall be on the roster of ordained ministers of this church and shall serve full time in office. At least two of these officers shall be lay members of a congregation of this Synod.

Section 2. The officers shall be elected by the Synod convention for a term of four years, according to procedures established in Bylaw 8. All officers shall serve until their successors assume office.

Section 3. Should a vacancy occur ad interim in any of the offices, the Synod Council is empowered to fill the same until the next regular business convention, or to call a special convention to fill the vacancy. Each election by a convention shall be for a full term of office.

Section 4. The terms of the officers shall begin on the first day of the third full month following election.

Section 5. An officer or other member of Synod Council may be removed from office by:

- a. a 75% majority vote of those delegates present and voting at a duly called convention of this Synod; or
- b. a 75% majority vote of those members of Synod Council present and voting at a duly called meeting of Synod Council.

Section 6. Assistants to the officers, if and when such positions are created by this Synod in convention, shall be elected by the Synod Council on nomination by the officer concerned. Such persons may be recalled or dismissed on proper notice by the action of the Synod Council. They shall be ineligible for membership on the Council.

Section 7. The Bishop shall:

- a. serve as leader and counsellor to the congregations, rostered ministers, and conferences of this Synod;
- b. convene and preside over conventions of this Synod and the meetings of the Synod Council;
- c. be its chief executive officer and oversee the offices of vice-chairperson, secretary, and treasurer, co-ordinate the work of all staff of this Synod, and appoint all committees not otherwise provided for;
- d. ensure that the constitution and bylaws of this Synod are observed and that its resolutions are implemented;
- e. visit the congregations and pastors of this Synod and confer with them concerning their spiritual and temporal welfare;
- f. have the privilege of voice in each congregation or ministry of this Synod, including congregational meetings;
- g. ordain or consecrate, or provide for the ordination or consecration of, all candidates accepted for the ministerial office;
- h. install, or provide for the installation of, the pastors of all congregations of this Synod and other rostered ministers called to service within this Synod, and induct into office the other officers of this Synod;
- i. be ex officio member of all committees of this Synod, its chief representative on the

boards of directors or trustees of all institutions in which this Synod is entitled to representation;

- j. be the custodian of the seal of this Synod and attest all documents as required;
- k. appoint the (Synod) archivist this Synod;
- l. report and make observations and recommendations to each regular convention of this Synod concerning its mission and ministry with observations and recommendations.

Section 8. The vice-chairperson shall:

- K. preside at Synod conventions and at meetings of the Synod Council on the request of the Bishop;
- L. in the event of the death, resignation, or incapacity of the Bishop, convene the Synod Council to fill the vacancy until the next convention and provide for the discharge of the Bishop's duties until the Synod Council has made the appointments;
- M. perform such additional duties as are set out in the bylaws.

Section 9. The secretary shall:

- a. keep the minutes of all conventions of this Synod, be responsible for the printing and distribution of such minutes and perform such other duties as this Synod may from time to time direct;
- b. keep a roster of the rostered ministers and of the congregations of this Synod;
- c. report to the secretary of this Church additions to and subtractions from the synodical roster, issue certificates of transfer for rostered ministers who are moving to other synods, and enter on the roster of this Synod the names of all rostered ministers for whom such certificates of transfer have been received;
- d. file a copy of the Annual Report with the Registrar of Companies within 30 days of the annual meeting or convention;
- e. be authorized, in the name of this Synod to attest all documents as required;
- f. deposit all papers and documents of historical value with the Synod archivist;
- g. serve as statistician of this Synod, secure the parochial reports of the congregations, collate the same for annual report to this Synod, and make composite figures available to the secretary of this Church;
- h. serve as the necrologist of this Synod.

Section 10. The treasurer shall:

- a. have charge of all the monies and accounts of this Synod, its deeds, mortgages, contracts, evidences of claims and revenues, and trust funds, holding the same at all times subject to the order of this Synod;
- b. manage the investment of funds owned or held in trust by this Synod, as authorized by the Synod Council;
- c. receive, record, and acknowledge all offerings, contributions, and legacies made to this Synod; collect all interest and income from its investment funds; and disburse funds as approved and directed by the Synod Council;
- d. transmit each month to the treasurer of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada the funds received by this Synod for the general work of the Church;
- e. inform each congregation, at least quarterly, of its record of giving to this Synod;
- f. keep an account for the conferences of this Synod and disburse to them such funds as are budgeted or otherwise appropriated for their use;

- g. present to each convention a detailed and audited report of all receipts and disbursements for the preceding fiscal year;
- h. be bonded under the fidelity coverage provided by this Church.

BYLAW 10. Synod Council

Section 1. The membership of the Synod Council shall be the officers of this Synod, together with eight additional members consisting of an equal number of rostered ministers and lay persons elected by the convention to serve for four years in such manner that the terms of one-half of the elected members shall expire each biennium. There shall be at least one rostered minister or layperson from each conference. No elected member shall be eligible for more than two consecutive terms.

Section 2. The officers of this Synod shall be the officers of the Synod Council.

Section 3. The Synod Council shall:

- a. plan, co-ordinate, supervise, and evaluate the activities of this Synod in carrying out its mission and ministry through actions including, but not limited to the following processes:
 - i. Each standing committee shall be convened by a member of Synod Council whose portfolio shall include both advocacy and administrative responsibilities for the committee.
 - ii. Portfolios, including communication, education, evangelism, and worship, shall be convened by a member of Synod Council whose responsibilities shall include advocacy and administration.
 - iii. Synod Council members shall be appointed to portfolios at the first Synod Council meeting following a Synod convention.
- b. be the directors of the corporation and trustees for this Synod;
- c. represent this Synod and attend to its business between conventions;
- d. elect executive staff if and when such positions are created by this Synod in convention;
- e. issue letters of call to rostered ministers who are full-time officers or staff officials of this Synod, or who are called to special service;
- f. provide for an annual review of the rosters of rostered ministers and congregations;
- g. determine the time and place for each convention and prepare its proposed agenda and program;
- h. recommend annual budgets to the regular business conventions;
- i. set the salaries of the Bishop and staff of this Synod;
- j. elect the representatives to the governing bodies of inter-church agencies to which this Synod is related;
- k. fill vacancies to any elective position until the next business convention;
- l. consult with program committees and appoint committee members as necessary when vacancies exist and when sufficient lay and/or rostered representation is required;
- m. appoint members to standing committees as required;
- n. report its actions to the regular business convention;
- o. approve candidates for call, ordination or consecration, and admission to the roster of ordained ministers;

- p. perform the additional duties prescribed in the constitution, bylaws, and resolutions of this Synod;
- q. provide for the publication of a synodical paper and appoint its editor;
- r. establish personnel policies for this Synod;
- s. revise the synodical budget, as may be required.

Section 4. The Synod Council shall have at least two regular meetings annually. Special meetings may be called by the Bishop of this Synod or, in the case of the Bishop's death or removal, by the vice-chairperson. A majority of the members of the Synod Council shall constitute a quorum.

Section 5. A resolution in writing, sent to all members of Synod Council and signed by 75% of the members of Synod Council and placed with its minutes shall be valid and effective as if regularly passed at a meeting of Synod Council.

BYLAW 11. Financial Matters

Section 1. The fiscal year and the budget year of this Synod shall be from July 1 to June 30 of the following year.

Section 2. The annual budget and financial reports of this Synod shall reflect the entire range of its activities. The income listed shall include support from all sources.

Section 3. The annual budget shall include an amount for contingency not to exceed 7% of the budget.

Section 4. There shall be an operating reserve, determined by the Synod Council, of no more than 15% of the following year's budget.

Section 5. Representatives of the Synod Council shall meet with representatives appointed by the National Church Council to agree upon this Synod's commitment goal for support of the budget of the Church during the next fiscal year. These representatives shall recommend for approval by this Synod and by the National Church Council, the amount of support to be transmitted through this Synod to this Church

Section 6. Special appeals to congregations for the raising of funds shall require the consent of the convention or the Synod Council.

Section 7. Subject to Section 8 of this Bylaw 11, the Synod Council may borrow money on behalf of and in the name of this Synod in order to carry out the purposes of this Synod.

Section 8. No debentures shall be issued except by resolution adopted by a 75% majority vote of this Synod in convention.

Section 9. No real estate shall be purchased, disposed of, or encumbered in any manner except by resolution adopted by a 75% majority vote of the Synod Council or this Synod in convention.

Section 10. The financial accounts of this Synod shall be submitted annually for audit to a chartered accountant named by the Synod Council.

Section 11. This Synod shall be carried on without purpose of gain for its members, and any profits or other accretions to the organization shall be used in promoting its objects.

BYLAW 12. Standing Committees

Section 1. Members of all standing committees shall be appointed by Synod Council with effort made to provide parity in regional representation and between lay and clergy.

Section 2. Unless specified, each committee shall:

- a. ordinarily consist of one member from each conference unless additional members

- are appointed by Synod Council;
- b. meet at least once a year;
- c. submit an annual report and minutes of its meetings to the Synod Council;
- d. prepare an annual budget for its program(s) and submit it to the Synod Council;
- e. be elected or appointed in such manner that the terms of one-half of the members shall expire each biennium;
- f. submit a report of its activities to each regular convention, with such recommendations as it may desire.

Section 3. Committees shall consist of rostered and lay members, nominated by election by conferences and appointed by Synod Council for terms of four years. All conferences eligible to provide a nominee for a committee or committees shall be represented if they so choose on those committees for which they make nomination. Additional appointments may be made by Synod Council. No person shall be eligible to serve on more than two consecutive terms. No person shall be a member of more than one committee at the same time.

A. The Committee for Theological Education and Leadership

Section 1. The task of the committee shall be to:

- a. equip and challenge members of this Synod to provide Christian ministry to and through educational institutions and programs with this Synod and Church, working in consultation and harmony with the national council of this Church;
- b. stimulate interest, and identify and mobilize resources for Christian ministry to and through post- secondary education through educational institutions of this Church.
- c. stimulate interest, and identify and mobilize resources for theological education in this Synod by:
 - i. providing support of rostered ministers and professional lay workers;
 - ii. selecting, endorsing, supporting, and recommending candidates for rostered ministry according to policies and procedures developed by the National Church Council;
 - iii. providing theological education for lay leaders;
 - iv. providing for and encouraging continuing education for the rostered ministers and professional lay workers of this Synod.

B. The Committee for Faith and Society

Section 1. The task of the committee shall be to:

- a. equip and challenge members of this Synod for Christ-centered ministry in society wherein faith is activated in love toward justice and reconciliation in the human family, working in consultation and harmony with the parallel offices and structures of the ELCIC; seek to assist this Synod and its congregations to:
 - C. participate in appropriate programs, resource development, partnerships, networks, institutes, and legislative processes in society with a Christ-centered ministry;
 - D. participate in appropriate programs, chaplaincies, and institutions in the area of extended care ministry;
 - E. receive, identify, and articulate issues, needs, and concerns in all aspects

of ministry in society, and to develop and implement strategies of response, both individual and corporate;

F. address issues of justice within this Synod and its congregations.

C. The Committee for Missions

Section 1. The task of the committee shall be to:

- a. equip and challenge members of this Synod for local and global mission, working in consultation and harmony with the parallel offices and structures of this Church;
- b. stimulate interest, and identify and mobilize resources for the mission program of this church as developed by the parallel offices and structures of this Church;
- c. suggest ways and means to stimulate interest in and support for world missions among the congregations of this Synod;
- d. develop strategies for mission development within this Synod by:
 - i. seeking new fields for mission development;
 - ii. advising on anticipatory church sites and mission development;
 - iii. consulting with mission support congregations to review and recommend proposals and grants.

D. The Committee for Stewardship

Section 1. The task of the committee shall be to:

- a. equip and challenge members of this Synod to recognize the true nature of Christian stewardship;
- b. work in consultation and harmony with this Church to equip and challenge members of this Synod to practice Christian stewardship;
- c. through education and visitation programs, assist pastors and members to become more intentional about personal and congregational stewardship, beginning with the Biblical tithe;
- d. assist this Synod, in collaboration with the conferences of this Synod, to encourage annual stewardship programs;
- e. promote programs for special giving, as authorized by this Church;
- f. promote wills awareness.

E. The Committee for Youth Ministry

Section 1. The task of the committee shall be to:

- a. equip and challenge members of this Synod to provide youth ministry to and through its congregations, working in consultation with the parallel offices and structures of the national Church;
- b. assist congregations by stimulating interest, and identifying and mobilizing interest, support, and resources for youth ministry among the congregations of this Synod by:
 - i. providing support and training for youth leaders;
 - ii. planning biennial or triennial Synod youth gatherings;
 - iii. evaluating, selecting, developing and circulating material resources for congregations.

- c. seek ways and means to stimulate and support ministry to and with youth and others outside the church;
- d. facilitate communal youth ministry among congregations in this Synod and with other churches.

F. The Committee for Communications

- Section 1. The task of the committee shall be to equip and challenge members of the BC Synod to communicate the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the mission and ministry of this Synod, with a focus on the media and method of communication, by:
- a. serving as the accountability structure for the volunteer communication staff;
 - b. serving as a communications policy review committee, monitoring and auditing communication needs within the Synod and recommending policy;
 - c. exploring and utilizing new media and technology for improved, alternative methods of communication;
 - d. conducting and coordinating synod communication functions.

G. The Committee for Specialized Ministries

- Section 1. The membership of the committee shall consist of three to four persons appointed by Synod Council for terms of four years. No person shall be eligible to serve more than two consecutive terms.

- Section 2. The task of the committee shall be to:

- a. recommend, advise, support and monitor rostered pastors for specialized ministries;
- b. establish qualifications and review all applications from clergy for call to specialized ministries;
- c. submit to Synod Council the names of those recommended for call to a specialized ministry, and to provide Synod Council with the committee's rationale for such recommendations;
- d. oversee the work of all clergy in specialized ministries;
- e. ensure that there is adequate supervision of all those who are called to specialized ministries;
- f. receive annual reports from the clergy serving in specialized ministries;
- g. provide ongoing support to clergy serving in specialized ministries;
- h. provide a bond between those serving in specialized ministries and this Synod;
- i. facilitate inter-disciplinary studies, e.g. meetings and conferences, etc., for those serving in specialized ministries;
- j. foster collegiality among those who serve in specialized ministries;
- k. ensure that each person in specialized ministry be a member of a local congregation of this Church and attend synodical conventions, conference conventions, church worker conferences and congregational events;
- l. report annually to the Synod Council.

H. Examining Committee

- Section 1. This Synod shall participate in the Western Synods Examining Committee. Terms of reference for and procedures of the Examining Committee shall be

defined in the candidacy manual of this Church.

Section 2. It shall be the duty of this committee to examine candidates for ordination, or for reception from other Lutheran churches with whom mutual recognition of ministry has not been established, and to present recommendations to the Synod Council.

Section 3. The committee shall work in close co-operation with the Committee for Theological Education and Leadership and the parallel offices and structures of this Church.

I. The Committee for Campus Ministry

Section 1. The membership of the committee shall consist of three to four persons appointed by Synod Council for terms of four years. No persons shall be eligible to serve more than two consecutive terms.

Section 2. The task of the committee shall be to:

- a. encourage and support the Lutheran ministry on campuses throughout the BC Synod;
- b. enter into appropriate ecumenical relations to enhance campus ministry in BC;
- c. establish guidelines, policies and recommend terms of reference for the formation of local campus ministry committees on the various campuses throughout BC;
- d. receive requests for formal recognition of individual campus ministry committees throughout BC;
- e. prepare policies and priorities in order to invite and receive funding requests from campus chaplains or local campus ministry committee, and on behalf of campus ministry throughout BC, submit budgetary request to Synod Council;
- f. work in consultation with the parallel offices and structures of this Church to stimulate interest and identify and mobilize resources for Christian Ministry to and through post secondary educational institutions in British Columbia.
- g. provide opportunities for chaplains and others involved in campus ministry throughout the BC Synod to gather periodically to exchange ideas and receive mutual support.

J. The Committee for Worship

Section 1. The task of the committee shall be to:

- a. assist congregations in their central task of providing worship, which nurtures, feeds challenges and prepares congregations for mission;
- b. work in consultation with the parallel offices and structures of the National Church, helping to maintain and undergird a strong worship ministry that is faithful to our liturgical and sacramental tradition, and is responsive to the needs of congregations; assisting in introducing new resources/programs to congregations, and informing the National Church of the particular resource needs of the Synod in the area of worship;
- c. stimulate, support and train worship leaders – including but not limited to musicians, assisting ministers, sacristans, ushers, artists and readers – and encourage the development of a creative and inspiring atmosphere to worship God in this Synod and its congregations;

- d. in consultation with the Bishop, to plan and coordinate worship for Synodical events, including the biennial synod convention.

BYLAW 13. Theological and Educational Institutions

A. Seminary

- Section 1. This Synod acknowledges its responsibility to maintain a theological seminary within the guidelines provided by this Church, to strengthen this seminary spiritually and academically, and to provide for its financial support.
- Section 2. Lutheran Theological Seminary, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan:
- e. The Board of Governors of Lutheran Theological Seminary, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, shall control and manage the seminary and determine its academic and administrative affairs. The property of the seminary, both real and personal, shall be held by the Board of Governors in trust for and under the guidance of the synods of British Columbia, Alberta and the Territories, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba-Northwestern Ontario.
 - f. The board may, in consultation with the National Church Council, propose to the synod(s) an increase in the number of its members, such increase to include an equal number of rostered ministers and lay persons. Any proposal for increase in the number of members of the board must have the approval of the synod(s).
 - g. The term of office for each member of the board shall be four years, except in the following cases:
 - i. Where a member is appointed to fill a vacancy, such appointment shall be by the Synod Council and shall be for the remainder of the term of the predecessor;
 - ii. In the case of the first of any new elections in connection with increasing the number of the said board, the terms of office shall be for two or four years, so spaced that one-half of the membership of the board shall be elected each biennium.
 - h. Members of the board shall be eligible to serve for not more than two consecutive terms.
 - i. Financial support for the seminary shall be determined by a process of consultation between the Board of Governors, the National Church Council, and the Synod Council.
 - j. The board shall make an annual report to the regular convention of this Synod.

B. Lutheran Campus Ministry

- Section 1. Where physical facilities for this ministry are owned or secured, title shall be held in the name of the British Columbia – Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada.
- Section 2. The British Columbia Synod – Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada shall control and manage the Lutheran Campus Centre at the University of British Columbia. The property of the Lutheran Campus Centre at the University of British Columbia of British Columbia, both real and personal, shall be held in trust for and under the guidance of this Synod.
- Section 3. Such facilities shall be administered by campus ministry board(s) of Trustee established by action of Synod Council.

BYLAW 14. Auxiliaries

- Section 1. There shall be synodical units of the official auxiliaries of this church. Such units shall report to the Synod Council and convention. The Bishop, or an appointee, shall have seat and voice at synodical unit conventions and board meetings.

BYLAW 15. Synod Policies

Section 1. There shall be a Synod policy called Policy and Procedures Dealing with Sexual Abuse or Sexual Harassment by Clergy, Lay Diaconal Ministers, Synodical and Congregational Leaders adopted by Synod Council and reported to this Synod in Convention.

BYLAW 16. Amendments

Section 1. Amendments to this constitution and bylaws may be enacted by special resolution at any Synod convention, provided they are proposed in writing by Synod Council, the National Church Council, a conference of this Synod in convention, or a congregation at a duly called meeting, and are circulated in the convention mailings or to the chairpersons of all congregations of this Synod at least thirty days in advance of the Synod convention, and adopted, with or without change, by 75% of those present and voting.

Section 2. Amendments become effective upon acceptance by the Registrar of Companies.

BYLAW 17. Synod Study Conference

Section 1. A committee appointed by the ministers of this Synod and approved by the Bishop shall plan and implement an annual study conference.

Section 2. The Study Conference Committee shall work in consultation with the Bishop to decide time, place and topic for the study conference and to establish a budget to be approved by Synod Council.

Bourinot's Rules of Order

Bourinot's Rules of Order are the guidelines for business meetings at our church conventions. These are the same rules that govern debate in the parliament of Canada.

General Principles

1. Proper opportunity is given to all concerned for an expression of opinion.
2. Rights of a minority are respected.
3. Clear decisions are reached on the basis of a free majority vote.
4. Proceedings are governed by an assessment of the issues rather than by personality factors.

MOTIONS

An issue cannot be discussed unless a *motion* is formally presented, with the exact wording of the motion being the focus of debate.

Main Motion

A motion must be moved, seconded and accepted by the chair. The mover says "I move that..." If a motion is out of order or beyond the authority of the meeting, the chair can refuse to accept it. The chair then asks, "Is there a seconder." If another delegate "Seconds" the Motion, then it is open to debate by the assembly. Unless the motion is dealt with, all discussion must be addressed only to the motion. If the motion is not seconded, then it cannot be debated.

A motion should be worded in the affirmative and should express fully and clearly the intent of the mover. Its meaning should be clear to somebody who later reads the minutes. It is best if the motion is prepared in writing and made available to the secretary at the time it is moved.

When discussion is complete, the chair asks, "Are you ready for the question?" and repeats the complete motion. The members vote and if the majority votes in favour, the chair states, "Carried."

A motion may be withdrawn by its mover only with the assent of the meeting as a whole.

After a motion is declared carried or defeated, it cannot be brought up again at the same meeting. If it becomes necessary to rescind (repeal) a motion, it can be announced at the meeting and then discussed and voted on at a subsequent meeting.

Subsidiary Motions

These motions provide a way to handle main motions besides simply debating and voting on them. (They are listed in order of ranking.)

- **Postpone indefinitely** – this procedure kills the main motion without voting against it.
- **Amend** – This is the most widely used subsidiary motion. In the excitement of making a motion, the wording may be unclear or incomplete. Amendments must relate specifically to the main motion and cannot merely negate the motion. The wording used is “I move to amend the motion by substituting the words... with the words... so that the motion will read...” The chair will restate the main motion or even read it to show how the main motion would change if the amendment is passed. The amendment is voted on before the main motion.

An amendment may be amended and must be moved and voted on in the same ways as the first amendment. However, amendments to amendments should be avoided to maintain the sanity of the chair and membership.

- **Commit or refer** – this action sends the main motion to a committee. Use this procedure when the main motion requires more research and in-depth discussion. If used, this motion should include the size of the committee, how it is to be selected, the specific item, and a deadline for reporting to the main group.
- **Postpone definitely** (to a certain time) – This can mean later in the same meeting or a subsequent meeting. The reason would be to get more information or wait until another event has taken place on which to base a decision.
- **Limit or extend debate** – It imposes specific limits on the time allowed for a debate and the number of times any member may speak to the motion. It can also be used to extend the time. Needs two-thirds vote to carry.
- **Previous question** – The object is to immediately close debate and vote on the issue. This motion cannot be amended or debated. The value is in ending frivolous debate. The motion is made in the form, “I move that the question now be put.” Needs two-thirds to carry.
- **Lay on the table** – This is the highest ranking subsidiary motion. It temporarily sets aside the main motion and subsidiary motions. It differs from Postpone because it can be recovered later. It allows the meeting to go on to other business. A later motion by the membership can bring the matter back into discussion.

Privileged Motions (Housekeeping Motions)

These are variations of motions and rank above subsidiary and main motions. They never relate directly to a pending question but deal with issues that need immediate attention. They are not debatable.

- **Call for orders of the day** – to get the meeting back on track (return to the agenda)
- **Raise a question of privilege** – to get immediate action on simple matters such as asking speaking to talk louder. Does not require seconder or a vote.
- **Take a recess** – to ask for a short break. Requires a seconder and majority vote to carry.
- **Adjourn** – most frequently used to close the meeting. Any debate after adjournment is unofficial.

Incidental Motions

These motions deal with procedural matters but do not relate directly to business.

- **Point of order** (or question of privilege) – when debate begins on a motion that has not been seconded, or if someone tries to make an additional motion when one is already on the floor.
- **Appeal the decision of the chair** – to challenge a decision made by the chair. Must be made immediately after the chair's decision.
- **Suspend the rules** – to discontinue the rules when the group wishes to do something against its regular rules, but not in conflict with its constitution or bylaws. Requires two-thirds vote to carry.

This is a summary of information taken from Bourinot for the Baffled, a publication of the Communications Committee of the Eastern Synod, 1994.

Writing a Good Motion

By Rev. Clifford Reinhardt

Pastor, Spirit of Life Lutheran Church, Vancouver

Secretary, BC Synod

Introduction

This little essay is first and foremost a primer on writing good motions for the sake of good process and the institutional health of the church. It's also a meditation on the church itself and the nature of new life breaking into an old creation. Although much of this content is transferrable to a corporate entity other than the church, I'm consciously writing as a leader in the BC Synod – Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada. That means that some of the content is specific to our church, particularly in view of our subscription to *Bourinot's Rules of Order*.

A motion is a tool of democracy. It's a carefully worded proposition by which the promoter of the motion (the mover) seeks agreement from other people in the meeting, in sufficient numbers to enjoin the desired action upon the entire body. We present motions at the business meetings of various structures of our church (committees, boards, councils, congregations, synods, national church) because we believe in the mission and ministry of the church of Jesus Christ. We further believe that the body that is meeting is authorized and equipped to act in order to achieve the goals or ends that we have in mind.

Writing a good motion is both a science and an art.

When a motion is written well, it prompts the people who have gathered for the meeting to consider thoughtfully the matter presented, to debate it so as to share observations and opinions with other people – even when our points of view don't coincide! – and then to decide whether to engage the action promoted by the motion. Once again, this is an exercise in democracy – that is, governance by the people.

When a motion is written poorly, it will typically result in confusion. Often it will also create more work for the business meeting, thus taxing the energies and patience of the people who have gathered. In some cases the motion may be ruled out of order, sometimes for reasons pertaining to the *process* of the business meeting, and sometimes for reasons pertaining to the *content* of the motion. This may cause embarrassment and dismay for the writer and/or mover of the motion.

I intend this document to promote a better understanding of the composition of a motion and the official processes pertaining to it, so as to equip and encourage people to take an interest and exercise their gifts in the leadership of the BC Synod and the whole church, for the sake of its mission and ministry in Jesus Christ.

Rev. Clifford Reinhardt

March 2016

The Structure of a Motion, Step by Step

Preliminary Step: No “Whereas” Clauses

People who have learned the ropes of a meeting under *Robert’s Rules of Order* may be accustomed to presenting or reading motions with lengthy preambles, typically beginning with the word, “Whereas.” Motions presented in the meetings of the ELCIC cannot begin like that, because *Bourinot’s Rules of Order* prohibits the practice. A motion written with a “whereas” clause, or a clause that functions as the same, must be ruled out of order.

Now, it may seem that this rule deprives the mover of the opportunity to explain the context and thus gaining at least a sympathetic hearing. But *Bourinot’s* also specifies that the mover of the motion be given the privilege of speaking first in the ensuing debate, thus restoring to him/her that opportunity.

Step 1: The Declarative Self: *I move.*

When one wishes to propose an action that s/he wants the group to undertake, one begins with “I” (first person, singular, nominative case). The second word is “move.” This is a verb in the present tense and declarative mood. Put it together and we have, “I move.”

It’s no small thing to face a group of people and move a motion. It can be a daunting challenge, particularly if the mover believes that his/her point of view is at odds with the prevailing view, or if s/he feels that the group is unsympathetic. But I believe that it’s critical for life together in the church of Jesus Christ that people give voice to their beliefs and points of view, with the expectation that other people give them a fair hearing. Thus, “I move!”

Essentially this means, “I propose,” but democratic convention and rules of order require the use of the word, “move.” This assumes, of course, that the one who is proposing is authorized to do so – that is, s/he is a member of the group. But what happens if a person who is not a member of a group wishes that group to consider a proposal?

When “I” Am Not Authorized to Declare

When a person is not a full-fledged member of that group (s/he might be a visitor, or might be serving as a liaison from another group), then s/he might be authorized to offer a proposal beginning with this formula, “Be it resolved.” What that phrase means is this: “Let the following be considered and a decision be reached.”

In our church such a process may occur when a committee wants a board or council to consider an action that the committee is advocating. Because the committee has no authority to move motions in the meeting of the board or council, it appeals to the body to consider its proposal by presenting it with the formula, “Be it resolved.” The chairperson may then put the matter before the body and ask for someone to move it.

Beware any attempts at shorthand! If such a proposal were to begin, “Resolved,” then a listener or reader might infer that the matter has already been decided, for that is what “resolved” means. This will certainly lead to confusion. For the sake of clarity, use the full expression ... even if it does sound a little odd to our 21st-century ears.

Step 2: The Subject or Actor

This is very simple: the subject or actor is the body that is meeting. For example, in a convention of the BC Synod, the actor is “the BC Synod in Convention.” Properly speaking, each and every motion of a convention of the BC Synod should read that way.

Now, it may seem redundant and laborious to repeat the full name of the body over and over again, especially if the name is long. And so I concede that it may be acceptable to abbreviate the full title – in our case, “the BC Synod.” But especially if there be any expectation that the motion will circulate outside that body, then the full name of the body should be used. This is not difficult to achieve in our era of computers and word processors. Here is an example from the 2012 Convention of the BC Synod:

Moved and Seconded that the BC Synod in Convention adopt the Minutes of the 2010 BC Synod Convention. **Carried.**

Please note, first of all, that because of church policy the mover and seconder are not named – hence the style, “Moved and Seconded.” But the main point in providing this quote is to illustrate the importance of accurate naming of the subject or author, in this case “the BC Synod in Convention.” It’s important to use this full title because of the way our church is structured, as stated by our Constitution and Bylaws. To repeat: I concede that it may be sufficient to simply write, “the BC Synod.” But no damage is done by citing the full name or title, and the practice further serves to remind people of the constitutive authority of these bodies.

Perhaps the worst short-form for the subject or the actor is the personal pronoun, “we” – for example, *I move that “we” direct ...* Exactly who is “we”?! There is no way to identify the antecedent of the pronoun. Moreover, I believe it is important to maintain a distinction between individual people and the offices they serve. It is not “we” who are enjoined to act; it is the *board* (or *committee*, or *council*, or *synod in convention*, etc.) that is enjoined to act.

Step 3: The Main Verb or Action Word

Normally (and preferably) this follows immediately after the subject. There are two qualities of the verb that are important for the writing of good motions.

A) The Voice must be active, not passive.

Consider these two different ways of wording a motion:

Active voice: “I move that the BC Synod in Convention instruct the Treasurer to ...”

Passive voice: “I move that the Treasurer be instructed to ...”

In the active-voice example the sentence is developing logically: the actor and the proposed action and the recipient of the action are clearly identified and connected in chronological sequence. In the passive-voice example, on the other hand, it at first looks like the Treasurer is the actor, but because the verb is in the passive voice the reader now (rightly) anticipates someone or something else as the actor. Who is that actor?! A good Committee of Reference and Counsel will assist the mover of the motion by editing the motion to the form of an active-voice sentence.

B) The Mood Must Convey a Wish or Desire

Every verb has a “mood.” This is a technical quality related to the real-world conditions from which the sentence arises. The *subjunctive mood* expresses a wish or desire. That’s exactly the nature of a motion, and its verb should exhibit that mood.

An example involving the subjunctive mood: “I move that the BC Synod in Convention commit itself to leading its congregations ...” This is the beginning of a well-worded motion in which the verb, “commit,” conveys the moods of *wish* or *desired action*.

Now consider the same motion constructed with the main verb in the indicative mood: “I move that the BC Synod in Convention is committing itself to leading its congregations ...”

This motion should be ruled out of order because the verb-mood connotes present reality, and thus the motion is meaningless. After all, if the BC Synod already “is committing” itself to the prescribed action, then there would be no need for the motion.

C) The Action Must Be Discernible

The action enjoined by the motion must be concrete and measurable. Usually this requires a grammatical object (more below). Motions that are worded so as to enjoin a body to think, consider, reflect, ponder, “get excited about,” lament, feel sorry for, etc., are not helpful and should be ruled out of order, because such actions are neither concrete nor measurable.

D) The Action Must Be Debatable

A motion should propose an action such that it is possible for a person to promote the contrary point of view in ensuing debate, or to vote No when the vote is finally called. Such a motion is described as “debatable.”

It may seem puzzling to prohibit motions that are not debatable, because (at least in some cases) the prescribed action is noble. Here’s an example: “I move that the BC Synod in Convention proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ.” Who could say No to such a motion?! Well, that’s exactly the point! It’s impossible to debate such a motion, because the Constitution and Bylaws of our church expressly state this as our mission, and therefore a contrary point of view cannot be expressed with any integrity. Neither is it possible to vote No with any integrity. Therefore, there is no integrity to the motion, and it must be ruled out of order.

As a rule, any motion that repeats or paraphrases what is already mandated by the Constitution, Bylaws, or Policies must be ruled out of order.

Of course, a contrary motion is also out of order – that is, a motion which seeks a goal contrary to the Bylaws or Policies cannot be supported with integrity, and must be ruled out of order. (On the other hand, someone may move a motion to amend Bylaws or Policies, or to rescind a motion already passed.)

Step 4: Expanding and Detailing the Action

Here is a fairly simple example, excerpted once again from the minutes of the 2012 BC Synod Convention:

Moved and Seconded that the BC Synod in convention instruct synod council to ensure that resources are put in place to implement all the recommendations of the Task Force on the Roles and Responsibilities of the Bishop and Synod Office.

The main actor is the BC Synod in convention. The motion has been carefully worded so as to acknowledge respective spheres of authority and conceivable action. The Synod-in-convention indeed possesses the authority to instruct the Synod Council to undertake a particular task, and that task is stated with care so that it is within the realm of possibility and thus is achievable.

The “final” or “end” clause states the goal of the motion – in this case, “to ensure that resources are put in place to implement ...” Grammatically speaking, the verb of the end clause is stated in the infinitive mood: “to ensure” Note that the end clause stops short of elaborating the specific ways in which those ends might be achieved, for that is a matter of administration rather than governance.

Here is another example that demonstrates some good motion-writing principles but comes up a little short in other respects (this is from the 2010 BC Synod Convention):

Moved and Seconded that the BC Synod in convention instruct Synod Council to ensure that all congregations receive a copy of the results of the social justice questionnaire, and that congregations be encouraged to study and use the information to guide and inspire the ministries of their own congregations.

The wording of the motion certainly reflects some thoughtfulness as to the division of powers and spheres of responsibility, and the actor and the receiver of the action are both clearly identified. Grammatically, the first part of the end clause (that is, up to the comma) is fine, but the second part of the end clause uses a passive-voice verb, “be encouraged,” which leaves the reader puzzled: Just who is supposed to do the encouraging?

Step 5: Say it all in one sentence

Sometimes one of the most challenging aspects of writing good motions is getting everything into one sentence. This is especially true when there is a list of things to be performed, or when there are contingencies that the motion must contemplate, or when certain conditions must be in place in order for the motion to produce the desired goal. If it seems impossible to fit everything into one sentence, then it might be the case that two or more motions are actually preferable and more effective. In any case, a motion must comprise one sentence only.

Step 6: Saying it in two motions: differentiating between a principle and a means

Certain goals may be easier for a meeting or convention to consider if differentiated into two parts: the principle of the matter, and the attainment or means of the matter. For example, if a voting member of the BC Synod in Convention believes that the BC Synod should expand its ecumenical cooperation with respect to a specific issue, and is fairly certain that the meeting will be amenable to the idea; and if that same member has a specific means in mind but is open to other possible means – then it would be useful to present two motions. The first motion would attend to the principle, and the second motion would attend to the means.

IN SUMMARY: Formulas for motions

- a) For an individual authorized to move a motion:

“I move that the BC Synod in Convention” + verb in active voice and subjunctive mood + an object + a goal or an end.

- b) For an individual or group not authorized to move a motion, but wishing to bring a matter to a meeting for its possible consideration:

“Be it resolved that the BC Synod in Convention” + verb in active voice and subjunctive mood + an object + a goal or an end.