

Approved Model Constitution and Bylaws Special Unit

This version reflects actions taken by the Tenth Triennial Convention (2017).

Preamble: Per action taken by the voting members of the Fourth Triennial Convention, adopting an Executive Board recommendation to establish special units within the organization of Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the following model constitution and bylaws have been established.

NOTE

Portions marked with an asterisk (*) are needed to fulfill the criteria for membership.

The provisions of the Constitution and Bylaws that pertain to the same subject have been placed together. The two types of provisions are identified in the following way:

Constitutional provisions are printed in **bold** type.

Bylaws are printed in regular type.

ARTICLE I—MEMBERSHIP AND NAME

***SECTION 1. Membership**

This unit shall be a member of Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, hereinafter designated as “Women of the ELCA.”

***SECTION 2. Name**

The name of this unit shall be [name of institution] Unit of Women of the ELCA.

ARTICLE II—STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

***SECTION 1. Purpose**

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

***SECTION 2. Commitment**

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

- a. come together for study, support, and action;
- b. participate in the ministry of Women of the ELCA beyond the unit;
- c. support financially the total program of Women of the ELCA; and
- d. designate leadership that shall be in communication with the synodical and churchwide women's organization.

***SECTION 3. Affiliation**

This unit shall maintain affiliation with the synodical women's organization to which it is assigned.

ARTICLE III—PARTICIPATION

***SECTION 1. Composition**

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

***SECTION 2. Participation**

Participation in this unit shall be open to all women in this institution and to other women who subscribe to the purpose.

***SECTION 3. Congregational Membership**

Women elected to leadership in this unit and elected as voting members of a convention of the synodical women's organization shall be participants in this special unit and voting members of an ELCA congregation.

ARTICLE IV—RELATIONSHIPS

***SECTION 1. Synodical Women's Organization**

This unit shall participate in the life and work of [name of synodical women's organization] and report annually to the synodical women's organization board.

***SECTION 2. Cluster or Conference**

This unit shall participate in activities within the cluster or conference to which it is assigned.

***SECTION 3. Synodical Women's Organization Convention**

In an interdependent partnership with the [name of synod] Synodical Women's Organization, this unit shall participate in the convention of the [name of synod] Synodical Women's Organization by

- *Item 1. Electing a voting member and an alternate to represent the unit; and

***Item 2. Cooperating in the process for nomination of officers and board members of the synodical women's organization.**

***SECTION 4. Churchwide Women's Organization**

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

***Item 2. This unit shall participate in the process of nomination of officers and board members.**

ARTICLE V—MEETINGS

SECTION 1. Program

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

SECTION 2. Business

There shall be business meetings held (at least annually) for purposes such as receiving reports, projecting plans, electing leadership, and adopting an annual budget.

ARTICLE VI—LEADERSHIP

SECTION 1. Leaders (Officers)

This unit shall have [names of leadership positions], elected for a term of one year with one reelection.

SECTION 2. Duties of Leaders (Officers)

SECTION 3. Duties of Unit (Board) (Coordinating Committee) (Coordinating Council)

ARTICLE VII—PLANNING

SECTION 1. Program Areas and Goals

This unit shall engage in planning, giving attention to the program areas and ~~ends~~ goals established by Women of the ELCA.

SECTION 2. Program Planning

The unit (board) (coordinating committee) (coordinating council) shall be responsible for the total program planning for the unit.

ARTICLE VIII—NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

SECTION 1. Nominating Committee

There shall be a Nominating Committee of at least three persons to present nominees for [names of leadership positions] for election by this unit.

SECTION 2. Elections

All elections shall be for a term of one year with one reelection.

ARTICLE IX—FINANCE

SECTION 1. Fiscal Year

The fiscal year and the budget year for this unit shall be January 1 through December 31, unless the institution in which the special unit is situated expressly requires a different fiscal year.

SECTION 2. Administration

This unit shall develop and administer its own financial plan or budget that shall reflect support for the total program of Women of the ELCA.

SECTION 3. Transmittal

This unit shall transmit funds regularly in accordance with established procedures.

SECTION 4. Reports

This unit shall provide annual financial reports to participants (and as required by the institution in which the special unit is situated).

SECTION 5. Financial accountability

An annual accounting compilation or review of this unit's financial records shall be conducted by a financial review committee of the unit.

ARTICLE X—DISSOLUTION CLAUSE

In the event of the dissolution of this special unit, any surplus property remaining after the payment of its debts shall be disposed of by transfer to the churchwide women's organization or its successor provided that said organization is, at the time of dissolution, a qualified organization as described in Section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Service Code of 1986 or a comparable provision, and, if not, to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or its successor, and, if not, to one or more organizations so qualified in such proportions as the leadership of this unit shall determine.

ARTICLE XI—BYLAWS AND AMENDMENTS

SECTION 1. Bylaws

This unit may adopt bylaws not in conflict with this constitution and the institution in which the special unit is situated by a majority vote, provided they have been presented in writing at the previous meeting.

SECTION 2. Amendments

- Item 1. This constitution may be amended at any regular business meeting or special meeting of this unit by a two-thirds vote of the women present and voting, provided the proposed amendment has been presented at the previous meeting and is consistent with the purpose of Women of the ELCA.**
- Item 2. Amendments to the bylaws may be adopted by a majority vote by the unit after having been presented at the previous meeting.**
- Item 3. Whenever the secretary of Women of the ELCA officially informs the special units that the Women of the ELCA Triennial Convention has amended the approved Model Constitution and Bylaws for Special Units, whether by setting out alternate clauses or otherwise, such provisions shall be introduced at once into this constitution and notice of this action shall be forwarded to the synodical president.**

Revised 2017