



# **CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS**

**OF THE  
WISCONSIN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD  
AND THE  
CONSTITUTION FOR THE DISTRICTS**

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# CONSTITUTION OF THE WISCONSIN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD

## PREAMBLE

We, the members of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS), recognizing that the Word of God is the ultimate authority and that it provides proper direction in the day-to-day governance of WELS, present this constitution and bylaws to establish the corporate structure of the synod and to further delineate the functional roles of the governing bodies, officers, administrators, areas of ministry, and the administration of the synod.

## Article I

### NAME

The name of this synodical body shall be the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

## Article II

### CONFESSION OF FAITH

**Section 1.** The synod accepts the canonical books of the Old and New Testament as the divinely inspired and inerrant Word of God and submits to this Word of God as the only infallible authority in all matters of doctrine, faith, and life.

**Section 2.** The synod also accepts the confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church embodied in the *Book of Concord of 1580*, not insofar as, but because they are a correct presentation and exposition of the pure doctrine of the Word of God.

## Article III

### MEMBERSHIP

**Section 1.** The synod shall consist of all congregations, pastors, and male teachers who shall have joined the synod through their respective districts.

**Section 2.** New members shall be admitted by the synod in its convention upon the recommendation of the appropriate district president, or through the appropriate district convention.

**Section 3.** Membership in the synod shall be restricted to congregations, pastors, and male teachers who agree in doctrine and practice with the confession referenced in Article II.

## Article IV

### OBJECT

The object and purpose of the synod shall be to extend and conserve the true doctrine and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church:

- (a) By assisting and counseling in every appropriate way the pastors, teachers, and congregations affiliated with the synod;
- (b) By establishing and maintaining theological seminaries, colleges, academies, schools, and other institutions of learning;
- (c) By establishing and maintaining home and world missions and such charitable institutions as it may deem appropriate to its calling;
- (d) By printing, publishing, purchasing, selling, and disseminating literature that maintains Lutheran doctrine and practice;
- (e) By furnishing appropriate literature for parish schools, Sunday schools, missions, institutions, and churches.

**Article V**  
**RIGHTS AND POWERS**

**Section 1** The synod shall have the legal right and power to perform every act not prohibited by law, including but not limited to:

- (a) Secure, maintain, administer, regulate, and manage endowments, legacies, bequests, trust funds, and any and all types of funds entrusted to it;
- (b) Purchase or otherwise acquire, own, and hold real estate, buildings, and personal property of every kind and description in the interest of the synod and convey, sell, assign, transfer, lease, mortgage, pledge, exchange, or otherwise dispose of any of its property, real, personal, or mixed, as may be for its best interests;
- (c) Take, hold, and receive by gift, devise, or bequest property of every name and nature, and hold and use such property for any and all purposes designated in this constitution and any of its bylaws.

**Section 2.** The synod shall have the legal right and power to dissolve itself by the resolution of a regular or special convention of the synod. In the event of dissolution of the synod, the Synodical Council shall, after paying or making provision for the payment of all the liabilities of the synod, dispose of its remaining assets. The disposition of assets, as directed by the synod in convention, shall be exclusively for the purposes of the synod by distributing the remaining assets to, and only to, one or more organizations under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1994 or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law.

**Article VI**  
**CONFERENCE OF PRESIDENTS**

**Section 1.** There shall be a Conference of Presidents consisting of the president of the synod, first and second vice presidents of the synod, and the presidents of the synod's districts.

**Section 2.** The Conference of Presidents shall be responsible for supervising, maintaining, and strengthening synodical unity of doctrine and practice; for funding the synod's ministry; for exchanging information and counsel relative to the most advantageous placement of pastors, professors, and teachers; and for promoting the synod's mission and ministry in the districts of the synod.

**Section 3.** The Conference of Presidents shall have the authority to discharge the responsibilities that are assigned to it under this constitution and bylaws.

**Article VII**  
**SYNODICAL COUNCIL**

**Section 1.** There shall be a Synodical Council consisting of at least the following: one lay member elected by each district, three district presidents selected by the Conference of Presidents, and six at large members from among the pastors and male teachers active in the ministry. The size, composition of members, terms of office, and method of election shall be specified in the bylaws.

**Section 2.** Except for those responsibilities specifically conferred on the Conference of Presidents, the Synodical Council shall be responsible for the possession, care, control, and management of the property and activities of the synod in pursuit of its mission, including but not limited to planning, programs, operations, and legal and fiscal matters.

**Section 3.** The Synodical Council shall have the legal right and power to perform every act not prohibited by law and to act on behalf of the synod in all matters except those delegated to the Conference of Presidents under Article VI and those matters which the synod in convention has specifically reserved to itself under Article VIII. The Synodical Council shall be presumed to have acted within its authority and the burden of establishing otherwise shall be on the entity contending to the contrary.

#### **Article VIII**

##### **CONVENTIONS OF THE SYNOD**

**Section 1.** The synod shall convene every two years as a delegate synod. Districts shall meet during the year in which the delegate synod does not meet in regular convention.

**Section 2.** The synod in convention shall act as the legislative body of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. The convention shall establish, review, and amend the policies and the direction of the synod in pursuit of its mission and in recognition of Articles II and IV.

**Section 3.** The synod in convention shall be composed of the delegates elected by the districts, designated officers of the synod, and advisory delegates. Only the delegates elected by the districts shall have the right to make motions and to vote.

**Section 4.** At the convention of the synod, three-fifths of the voting delegates duly elected and officially seated shall constitute a quorum at the sessions.

**Section 5.** Special conventions of the synod may be called by the officers upon the written request of a majority of the district presidents.

**Section 6.** The delegates of the immediately preceding convention shall serve as delegates to special conventions.

#### **Article IX**

##### **OFFICERS OF THE SYNOD**

The officers of the synod shall be a president, first vice president, second vice president, and such other officers as are necessary for effective operation of the synod. The number of officers, duties, manner of election, and all other matters pertaining to officers shall be specified in the bylaws.

#### **Article X**

##### **DISTRICTS**

**Section 1.** The synod shall be divided into districts. The synod may create new districts and redivide or dissolve existing districts.

**Section 2.** The districts shall have the right and duty to exercise supervision over the doctrine and practice of their members in the manner prescribed by the bylaws of this constitution.

#### **Article XI**

##### **AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS**

**Section 1.** Proposed amendments to the constitution shall be presented in writing to the president of the synod. Notice of such proposed amendments shall be sent to all voting and advisory delegates at least 60 days prior to the next regular convention of the synod or may be included in the *Book of Reports and Memorials* to the convention if the book is sent more than 60 days prior to the convention.

- Section 2.** The synod in convention shall review the proposed amendments and refer such amendments to the following district conventions for their study and recommendations.
- Section 3.** At the next regular convention of the synod, following district review, the amendments together with the districts' recommendations shall be reviewed and submitted to the synod in convention for final action thereon. If three-fourths of the votes cast are affirmative, the amendment shall be declared adopted.
- Section 4.** Bylaws may be amended at any regular convention of the synod by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the votes cast, provided that notice of such amendments shall have been sent to all voting and advisory delegates at least 60 days prior to the convention, or may be included in the *Book of Reports and Memorials* to the convention if the book is sent more than 60 days prior to the convention.



# BYLAWS OF THE WISCONSIN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD

## DEFINITIONS

### Section 1.00

As used in this constitution and these bylaws the words below are defined as follows:

- (a) "Pastor" means anyone listed on the most current synodical rosters of "pastors -- active" or "pastors -- retired" who is holding a permanent call.
- (b) "Parish pastor" means anyone listed on the most current synodical rosters of "pastors -- active" or "pastors -- retired" who is holding a permanent call and serving a congregation.
- (c) "Teacher" means anyone who is ministry certified and listed on the most current synodical rosters of "men teachers -- active" or "men teachers -- retired" who is holding a permanent call, except that teachers who still have a program of education to complete and female teachers listed in the most current synodical roster are also included in Sections 8.20 and 8.60.
- (d) "Staff Minister" means any male who is ministry certified and listed on the most current synodical roster of "Staff Ministers -- active" or "Staff Ministers—retired" who is holding a permanent call. Male staff ministers are included in the male teachers category in all articles and bylaws. Male staff ministers who still have a program of education to complete and female staff ministers listed in the most current synodical roster titled "Female Staff Ministers—active" and "Female Staff Ministers—retired" are also included in Sections 8.20 and 8.60.
- (e) "Ex-officio member" is a member because of the position that this person holds. An ex-officio member holds all the rights of a full member, including the right to vote.
- (f) "Non-voting ex-officio member" is a member because of the position that this person holds. This person holds all the rights of full membership, except the right to vote.
- (g) "Advisory member" is a non-voting member whose role is to serve as a resource and advisor.
- (h) "WELS" refers to the corporate entity which includes its ministerial education schools and subsidiaries.
- (i) "Synod" refers to WELS members, congregations, and ministries.
- (j) "Affiliated ministries" refers to any ministry entity created and carried out by WELS members that is listed under "Affiliated Ministries" or "Lutheran College and High Schools" in the current WELS Yearbook.

## OFFICERS

### Section 2.00

#### President

- (a) The president shall officially represent the synod and promote the best interests of the synod. He shall exercise supervision over the official conduct of all officials of the synod, supervise the execution of convention resolutions, and oversee the total synodical operation, particularly to ensure that it is true to its mission and objectives and that it is being conducted within the framework of the synod's stated standards for doctrine and practice. He shall function in every way as the synod's pastor and chief executive officer of the synod. He shall be responsible for reporting to synod and district conventions.

- (b) The president shall be a pastor elected by the synod in convention for a four-year term with no limitation on the number of terms. The office shall be full time. The Synodical Council shall establish the salary of the president and provide adequate housing for him. In the event the president is not re-elected, the Synodical Council shall make financial arrangements for his support for such time as it deems necessary.
- (c) The president shall serve as the chairman of the Synodical Council and the Conference of Presidents and as an ex officio member of all other boards, commissions, and committees of the synod for which he does not serve as chairman. He may designate others to represent him on boards, commissions, and committees for which he does not serve as chairman.
- (d) Unless otherwise specified in the bylaws the president shall fill vacancies that may occur on any of the synod's boards, committees, and commissions until the next convention of the synod. With the concurrence of the remaining officers of the synod, he shall fill vacancies in the office of second vice president and recording secretary until the next convention of the synod.
- (e) The president shall authorize the installation of pastors and teachers called to administrative positions of the synod.
- (f) The president shall call the conventions of the synod as prescribed and, with the advice and counsel of the vice presidents, appoint the committees necessary for the conduct of its business.
- (g) The president shall submit a written report on the state of the synod to the regular synod and district conventions.

**Section 2.10**  
**First Vice President**

- (a) The first vice president shall assist the president and shall serve on the Conference of Presidents. He shall serve as a non-voting ex-officio vice chairman of the Synodical Council. He shall also serve as acting president whenever the president shall be prevented from discharging his duties, and in case of a vacancy in the presidency, shall serve until the next convention of the synod. The first vice president shall carry out such assignments the president may assign or are prescribed under these bylaws.
- (b) The first vice president shall be a parish pastor elected by the synod in convention for a four-year term with no limitation on the number of terms. The office shall be part time.
- (c) In the case of a vacancy in the first vice presidency, the second vice president shall serve until the next convention of the synod.

**Section 2.20**  
**Second Vice President**

- (a) The second vice president shall assist the president and first vice president, serve on the Conference of Presidents, and serve as the corporate secretary for the corporation.
- (b) The second vice president shall be a parish pastor elected by the synod in convention for a four-year term with no limitation on the number of terms. The second vice president shall carry out such assignments the president or first vice president may assign or are prescribed under these bylaws.

**Section 2.30**  
**Corporate Secretary**

- (a) The corporate secretary shall serve as secretary to the Synodical Council for the corporation.
- (b) The corporate secretary shall sign the necessary legal documents as required by law.
- (c) The second vice president shall serve as corporate secretary.

**Section 2.40**  
**Recording Secretary**

- (a) The recording secretary shall be elected by the synod in convention for a four-year term with no limitation on the number of terms. The recording secretary shall hold no other synodical office at the same time.
- (b) At the direction of the president, the recording secretary shall give notice of each convention of the synod by publication in *Forward in Christ* and/or on the WELS website and/or other suitable electronic means, the first such notice to be published not less than 90 days prior to the convention. The recording secretary shall also publish the list of voting delegates on the WELS website and/or through other suitable electronic means at least 60 days prior to the convention.
- (c) The recording secretary shall record the proceedings of the conventions of the synod and attend to their publication and distribution.
- (d) The recording secretary shall notify those who have been elected to office at the convention of the synod. Such notices shall be sent out not later than 14 days after the close of the convention.
- (e) The recording secretary shall serve as secretary and as an advisory member of the Conference of Presidents.
- (f) The recording secretary shall serve as chairman of the synod's Nominating Committee.
- (g) With the approval of the president, the recording secretary may appoint such assistants in carrying out the above assignments as he may deem necessary.

**Section 2.60**  
**Chief Financial Officer**

- (a) There shall be a chief financial officer who, under the direction of the president, shall have overall responsibility for the financial activities of the synod. These activities include accounting, audit, financial planning and reporting, forecasting, investments, tax, and treasury.
- (b) The chief financial officer shall be hired by the president after consultation with the Synodical Council. He shall be an employee of the synod and accountable to the president.
- (c) The chief financial officer shall be responsible for areas of ministry support assigned to him by the president. He shall be an advisory member of any board, commission, and committee of the synod assigned to report through his office as assigned by the president unless otherwise specified in these bylaws.

**Section 2.70**  
**Treasurer**

- (a) There shall be a treasurer who shall be responsible to the Synodical Council for the financial operations and safeguarding the assets of the synod.

- (b) The treasurer shall be appointed by the Synodical Council for a term of four years. He may be reappointed to successive terms.
- (c) The treasurer shall not be a member of the Synodical Council and shall not hold any synod elective position during his tenure of office.

**Section 2.75**  
**Other Officers**

The Synodical Council through the president may appoint additional officers for the efficient administration of its responsibilities. The Synodical Council shall report, through the president, to the synod in convention any additional officers that it so appoints.

**Section 2.80**  
**Election of the President, Vice Presidents, and Recording Secretary**

- (a) The election of the president and second vice president or first vice president and recording secretary shall take place at each regular synod convention and shall precede all other elections. Any of these offices vacated by election shall be filled by election at that convention for the remainder of the unexpired term.
- (b) The nomination of candidates for the offices of president and second vice president or first vice president and recording secretary shall be conducted by the synod in convention in alternate conventions on written nominating ballots. For the office of president anyone listed on the most current synodical roster of "pastors - active" shall be eligible. For the office of vice president only parish pastors on the same roster shall be eligible. For the office of recording secretary, all male called workers listed as active in the most current synodical roster shall be eligible.
- (c) The five nominees who shall have received the largest number of votes on the nominating ballot for president shall be the candidates for that office. The nominating ballot shall not be declared an election. The synod in convention shall then proceed to the election. If no candidate receives the majority of the votes cast on the first ballot, the name of the candidate receiving the fewest votes shall be stricken, and a new ballot shall be taken. The balloting shall continue in this manner until one candidate shall have received the majority of the votes cast.
- (d) The nomination and election of the vice presidents and recording secretary shall follow the same procedure as followed in the nomination and election of the president, except that the three nominees who shall have received the largest number of votes on the nominating ballot for first vice president, second vice president, and recording secretary shall be the candidates for the respective office.
- (e) The term of any newly elected officer shall begin immediately after the close of the regular convention at which the officer is elected. In the event of the election of a new synod president, the Synodical Council may ask the departing synod president to assist the newly elected president in a time of transition as established by the Synodical Council.

**Section 2.90**  
**Restriction on Offices and Appointments Held**

- (a) No person shall hold more than one elective office of the synod at any time.
- (b) No person shall hold more than one elective and one appointive office of the synod at any one time.

- (c) No person shall hold more than two appointive offices of the synod or its sub-corporations at any one time.
- (d) No person shall hold the office of synodical vice president and district president at the same time.
- (e) Elected positions to the Synodical Council or to the Ministerial Education Governing Boards are synodical positions and subject to the restrictions of this article.
- (f) Positions on the Synod Board of Appeals are not subject to the restrictions of this article.
- (g) Boards, commissions, or committees shall not confer honorary or advisory membership on their former members, former staff members, or former missionaries.
- (h) No person except the president whose salary is derived in whole or in part directly from the synod shall be eligible for membership on the Synodical Council.
- (i) A missionary under the supervision of the Board for World Missions may not be a member or permanent advisory member of an administrative committee of the Board for World Missions.

## **CONVENTIONS**

### **Section 3.00**

#### **Conventions: Time and Place**

- (a) Regular conventions of the synod as described in the constitution shall be held in the odd-numbered years. Conventions shall be scheduled during the last full week in July.
- (b) Each regular convention shall determine the place of the next convention. If the convention does not do so, the president and vice presidents shall do so. In case of necessity, the president and vice presidents may change the appointed time and place of the next convention.
- (c) Special conventions as described in the constitution shall be held at the time and place determined by the president and vice presidents.

### **Section 3.10**

#### **Conventions: Delegates**

- (a) At conventions of the synod, districts shall be represented by three classes of voting delegates: congregation representatives (lay delegates), pastors, and male ministry certified teachers. Only these official delegates shall be entitled to make motions and to vote at the convention of the synod.
- (b) The distribution of delegates among the districts shall be arranged as follows:
  1. The number of delegates shall not exceed 400 voting delegates.
  2. Half of the voting delegates shall be lay delegates.
  3. In determining the distribution of male teacher and of pastor voting delegates, teachers shall be represented in the same proportion to their total number as pastors are to their total number.
  4. The recording secretary of the synod, with the advice and consent of the Conference of Presidents, shall determine the delegate distribution so that each district is equitably represented. The number of delegates of the Arizona-California, Dakota-Montana, Nebraska, North Atlantic, Pacific Northwest, South Atlantic, and South Central districts shall not be less than their number of delegates to the 1993 convention.

5. Ordained pastors teaching at one of the educational institutions of the synod or within the synod are to be placed on the roster of active pastors. All other male members of the respective faculty are to be placed on the roster of active teachers.
  6. Overseas world missionaries shall be selected by the Board for World Missions as synod convention delegates with the same formula used in determining called ministerial delegates.
  7. Pastors and teachers, retired or active, are not eligible to serve as lay delegates.
- (c) The Conference of Presidents shall designate who shall attend conventions as advisory delegates.
  - (d) The recording secretary of the synod shall publish at least once the list of voting and advisory delegates on the WELS website and via electronic news release 60 days prior to the convention.
  - (e) The recording secretary of the synod shall notify the voting and advisory delegates in writing and provide their credentials at least 45 days but not more than 90 days prior to the convention.

### **Section 3.20**

#### **Conventions: Reports and Memorials**

All matters to come before the convention shall be presented in writing and/or electronically to the president by a deadline determined by the president and vice presidents. They shall also determine which of these matters are to be included in the *Book of Reports and Memorials* to the convention, a copy of which shall be made available to each congregation, pastor, and male teacher of the synod, and to each lay delegate.

### **Section 3.30**

#### **Conventions: Operations**

- (a) From the list of delegates, the president of the synod, in consultation with the vice presidents, shall appoint such committees as are necessary to expedite the work of the convention. Convention committee appointments shall be published at least once 60 days prior to the convention on the WELS website and via electronic news release. The president shall designate the committees that are to meet prior to the convention.
- (b) All voting and advisory delegates shall attend all sessions regularly until the close of the convention. When a delegate cannot attend all sessions, he shall present his excuse in writing.
- (c) The president shall appoint a parliamentarian for the convention. *Robert's Rules of Order* shall govern parliamentary procedure.
- (d) The election ballot submitted to the synod in convention by the Nominating Committee shall be approved by the synod in convention before proceeding to the election. The synod in convention may add to the slate of candidates.
- (e) All appointments made pursuant to the synod's constitution and bylaws shall be ratified by the synod in convention. At least 120 days prior to the synod convention, the respective boards, commissions, and committees shall notify the president of the synod which appointments expire.

### **Section 3.40**

#### **Nominating Committee**

- (a) There shall be a Nominating Committee that shall serve under the Conference of Presidents to assist them in preparing the nominating ballot for the convention.

- (b) The committee shall consist of the chairmen of the district nominating committees. It shall be convened and chaired by the recording secretary who shall request of each elective board chairman the name, position, and eligibility of board members whose terms are expiring at the next convention.
- (c) The Nominating Committee shall solicit information and suggestions for candidates from the board for which it is nominating candidates. It shall request the names of candidates in whatever other manner it deems expedient with a view to maintaining democratic procedure, including a request for candidates in *Forward in Christ*.
- (d) At least 10 months prior to the regular convention of the synod, each district chairman shall consult with his district nominating committee in advance of the meeting of the synodical Nominating Committee to secure names of qualified nominees for the specified synodical offices, at the same time gathering appropriate data on each person recommended.
- (e) In January of the convention year, the Nominating Committee shall nominate by ballot three candidates for each position on the following boards as terms expire: the Board for World Missions; the Board for Ministerial Education; the chairmen of the following boards: Home Missions, World Missions, and Ministerial Education; the Board of Appeals; and the chairmen of the Governing Boards of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Martin Luther College, Luther Preparatory School and Michigan Lutheran Seminary; all of whom shall be parish pastors. It shall nominate candidates to serve as chairmen of the commissions of Congregational Services, all of whom shall be pastors with the exception of the chairman of the Commission on Lutheran Schools, who shall be a teacher. It shall nominate the pastor and teacher at large members of the Synodical Council as their terms expire.
- (f) The list of candidates selected by the Nominating Committee shall be published once on the WELS website and via electronic news release at least 60 days prior to the convention to elicit additional data and comments from the synod's constituency and to familiarize the delegates with the names of the candidates prior to the convention.
- (g) The election ballot prepared by the Nominating Committee shall be submitted to the synod in convention for approval before the convention proceeds to the election. The synod in convention may add to the slate of candidates.
- (h) The committee shall supply the voting delegates with pertinent, factual information. Pertinent information shall include district affiliation, age, occupation or profession, address, and previous church experience.
- (i) The committee shall report to the president.

### **Section 3.50**

#### **Application for Membership in the Synod**

- (a) Pastors and male teachers desiring membership in the synod shall submit a written application together with the necessary credentials to the president of the district within which they reside.
- (b) A congregation desiring membership in the synod shall pass a resolution to that effect. It shall submit its application in writing to the president of the district within which it is situated and, at the same time, shall present a copy of its constitution and bylaws for approval.

- (c) Applications shall be acted on by the district in its regular conventions or by a convention of the synod upon recommendation of the district president in years when the district does not convene.

**Section 3.60**  
**Districts**

- (a) The synod shall operate with districts as described in the constitution and these bylaws. Districts shall supervise doctrine and practice in the district, receive new congregations into the district, receive pastors and male teachers into the district, conduct elections in the district, review and provide reaction to the reports of the synod president on the activities of the synod on behalf of the membership, and conduct discipline and hear appeals within the district.
- (b) A new district may be considered when a specified and defined geographic area of work has existed for 15 years and when such an area of work is composed of at least 25 congregations. The congregations comprising such an area, after consultation with parent district(s), may apply formally to the convention of the synod for district status.
- (c) If granted district status, such congregations shall meet in convention under the supervision of the president of the synod to adopt the constitution which governs districts, to elect officers prescribed by said constitution, and to elect various boards and committees prescribed by said constitution.

**CONFERENCE OF PRESIDENTS**

**Section 4.00**

**Conference of Presidents Duties and Responsibilities**

- (a) There shall be a Conference of Presidents as described in the constitution. The president of the synod shall serve as chairman of the Conference of Presidents and shall vote in the case of a tie. The recording secretary shall serve as secretary of the Conference of Presidents.
- (b) The Conference of Presidents, convening as the Synodical Assignment Committee, shall assign to their first calls the candidates presented by Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary and Martin Luther College, educational track. They shall also assign vicars and tutors and approve the assignment of emergency teachers and instructors. The Conference of Presidents shall name such advisors as it deems necessary to carry out this assignment.
- (c) The Conference of Presidents shall approve the solicitation of funds for support of synodical programs.
- (d) The Conference of Presidents shall make such appointments as are prescribed by the bylaws.
- (e) The Conference of Presidents shall call the executive director of *Forward in Christ* who shall report to the Conference of Presidents through the synod president. The Conference of Presidents shall appoint all other editors of *Forward in Christ* and a professor of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary to serve as the doctrinal consultant for *Forward in Christ*.
- (f) The Conference of Presidents shall establish the list of advisory delegates to conventions of the synod.
- (g) The Conference of Presidents shall elect from its members the three representatives to serve on the Synodical Council.



- (h) The president, the first vice president, and the second vice president shall serve as an executive committee of the Conference of Presidents and shall have the authority to act on behalf of the Conference of Presidents between meetings.
- (i) The Conference of Presidents shall be responsible for and assign the task of gathering statistics relative to the synod and shall issue the Statistical Report before June 1 of each year. The Conference of Presidents shall define the scope of the statistics to be assembled.
- (j) The Conference of Presidents shall submit, through the president, a written report of its activities to every regular convention of the synod. A similar report shall be presented through the president to the regular district conventions.

#### **Section 4.10**

##### **Commission on Inter-Church Relations**

- (a) There shall be a Commission on Inter-Church Relations that shall serve under the Conference of Presidents by representing the synod in doctrinal discussions with other church bodies who are, or are not, in fellowship with the synod in order to “extend and conserve the true doctrine and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church,” (constitution, Article IV). It shall also keep itself informed on the doctrinal trends in other church bodies.
- (b) The commission shall be composed of five parish pastors, three professors from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, and two professors from the other synodical schools. The Conference of Presidents shall recommend members to the president. The president shall appoint commission members for a term of four years. Commission members may succeed themselves twice. Insofar as practicable the membership shall represent diverse geographic areas.
- (c) The commission shall report to the president.

#### **Section 4.15**

##### **Congregational Services**

- (a) There shall be an appropriate number of commissions that shall serve under the Conference of Presidents to provide services and resources to congregations, schools, and individuals in the following areas of ministry: evangelism, worship, Lutheran schools, discipleship, special ministries, and congregational counseling.
- (b) The Conference of Presidents will recommend the appropriate number and nature of the commissions to the synod in convention.
- (c) The Conference of Presidents shall determine the number of members of each commission.
- (d) The commissions, their chairmen, and their directors are accountable to the Conference of Presidents.
- (e) Each commission shall consist of no fewer than five members, with a chairman elected by the synod in convention for a term of four years. Each chairman may succeed himself twice. Commission members shall be appointed by the Conference of Presidents for a term of four years. A commission member may succeed himself twice. Insofar as practicable, appointments shall reflect the synod’s geographic diversity. Appointments shall provide appropriate representation of pastors, teachers, staff ministers, and laymen, as well as, when appropriate, advisory members from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary and Martin Luther College.

- (f) The director of each commission shall be called by the Conference of Presidents in consultation with the commission.
- (g) Each commission director shall establish means of communication and coordination with district coordinators in carrying out the work of the commission.

#### **Section 4.20**

##### **Ministry of Christian Giving**

- (a) There shall be an office entitled “Ministry of Christian Giving” that shall serve under the Conference of Presidents to assist them by developing programs and mechanics for marshaling the financial resources of the synod.
- (b) The Ministry of Christian Giving shall assist the Conference of Presidents in carrying out their responsibility for funding the synod’s ministry financial plan.
- (c) The director of the Ministry of Christian Giving and the Christian giving counselors shall be called by the Conference of Presidents.
- (d) The director of the Ministry of Christian Giving shall report to the Conference of Presidents through the president or his designee.

#### **Section 4.30**

##### **Office of Communication Services**

- (a) There shall be an Office of Communication Services that shall serve under the Conference of Presidents to assist them in communicating the synod’s mission to the members of the synod. The Office of Communication Services will be administered by a Director of Communications who shall report to the Conference of Presidents through the synod president or his designee.
- (b) The Office of Communication Services, through its director, shall be responsible for a clear and consistent communication of the synod’s mission from the synod’s national offices; explore, support, and expedite innovative media usage, shared communication, and similar improvements on a continuing basis for WELS ministries and congregations; review and authorize all new communications originating in the synod’s national offices; and evaluate parallel communication functions and efforts to seek economy of cost and time in communication from the national offices.
- (c) The Director of Communications will work in close cooperation with the editor and staff of *Forward in Christ* to coordinate and facilitate clear and consistent communication to the constituency of the synod.

#### **Section 4.40**

##### **Support Committee**

- (a) There shall be a Support Committee that shall serve under the Conference of Presidents to assist them in addressing the emergency needs of called workers when such emergencies cannot be met by the congregation itself or by the appropriate board.
- (b) The committee shall be composed of five district first vice presidents. The Conference of Presidents shall recommend members to the president. The president shall appoint committee members for a term of four years. The president shall appoint one of the members to serve as chairman. The committee members may succeed themselves twice.

- (c) The committee shall establish policies for the support program of the synod and shall be responsible for its administration.
- (d) The committee shall report to the president.

#### **Section 4.50**

##### **Publication Review Committee**

- (a) There shall be a Publication Review Committee that shall serve under the Conference of Presidents to assist them in the review of the doctrinal content of all items to be published by Northwestern Publishing House.
- (b) The committee shall consist of a minimum of five pastors, active or retired, appointed by the president. Appointments shall be made for a term of four years. Committee members may succeed themselves twice.
- (c) The committee shall report to the Conference of Presidents through the synod president.

#### **Section 4.60**

##### **Colloquium Committee**

- (a) Pastors and male teachers from church bodies not in fellowship with the synod shall apply for membership by written application to the president of the district within which the applicant resides. Notice of such application shall be published by the district president at least twice in *Forward in Christ* and/or on the WELS website and/or by other electronic means.
- (b) A Colloquium Committee shall be appointed by the president. The committee shall be composed of the district president of the district in which the applicant resides, a professor from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary for the colloquy of a pastor, or a professor from Martin Luther College educational track for the colloquy of a teacher, and a vice president of the synod. The vice-president shall be chairman of the committee.
- (c) If the applicant is approved by the Colloquium Committee, he shall be eligible for a call, and notice of such approval shall be published by the chairman of the Colloquium Committee in *Forward in Christ* and/or on the WELS website and/or by other electronic means.

#### **Section 4.70**

##### **Committee on Constitutional Matters**

- (a) There shall be a Committee on Constitutional Matters that shall serve under the Conference of Presidents to interpret the constitution and bylaws.
  - 1. The committee shall be composed of three members appointed by the Conference of Presidents for a term of four years. Committee members may succeed themselves twice.
  - 2. The committee shall report to the Conference of Presidents through the synod president.
  - 3. The Conference of Presidents shall designate the chairman of the committee.
  - 4. The committee shall examine all proposed amendments to the constitution and bylaws and submit its recommendations on all proposed changes to the synod convention. After each convention of the synod, the committee shall publish the constitution and bylaws as amended by the synod in convention. Supplements only may be issued at the discretion of the committee.
  - 5. The committee shall have access to the synod's legal counsel through the president.

- (b) Any communicant member of the synod may request an interpretation of the constitution or bylaws. In cases of routine interpretational differences of opinion or controversy, interpretation shall be made by the committee, without hearing.
- (c) If a request for interpretation is significant, substantial, and of widespread interest in one or more districts of the synod, the committee may determine that a formal hearing is to be held to decide the matter. This determination is primarily that of the committee; however, the Conference of Presidents, by majority vote, may direct that a hearing be held. The hearing shall be conducted according to the following procedure:
  1. The chairman shall inform the president of the synod that a formal hearing is to be held.
  2. The Conference of Presidents shall appoint four members from the chairmen of the district constitution committees to serve along with the three members of the synod constitution committee to reach a decision on the matter in question.
  3. The committee shall determine who are the interested parties, and its decision shall be final.
  4. Notice of formal hearing shall be mailed to all parties at least 20 days before the time set for the formal hearing.
  5. The chairman shall make the rules and set the time and place for the formal hearing.
  6. The hearing shall be designed to provide an opportunity for the interested parties to present their interpretation(s) of the constitution or bylaws.
  7. Following the presentations, the chairman shall declare the hearing closed and the committee shall make its decision.
  8. The committee shall render a written decision.
- (d) Decisions of the committee shall be final and only the synod in convention shall have the ability to modify decisions of the committee.

## **SYNODICAL COUNCIL**

### **Section 5.00**

#### **Synodical Council Duties and Responsibilities**

- (a) There shall be a Synodical Council as described in the constitution, composed of 21 members. They shall be elected for a term of four years and may succeed themselves twice. The council shall consist of 12 lay members, one each elected by the districts; three district presidents elected by the Conference of Presidents; six at large members, elected by the synod in convention: two pastors, a male teacher, and the three area of ministry chairmen. The president of the synod shall serve as chairman of the Synodical Council and shall vote in case of a tie. In the president's absence, the first vice president of the synod shall serve as chairman. The chairman shall serve as a non-voting ex-officio member of the Synodical Council but shall vote, when acting as chairman, in the case of a tie.
- (b) The Synodical Council shall appoint an executive committee from its members that shall have the authority to act on behalf of the Synodical Council between meetings. The Synodical Council may prescribe jurisdictional limitations for the executive committee. The executive committee shall report its actions at the next meeting of the Synodical Council.
- (c) The advisory members of the council shall include the first vice president, second vice president, chief financial officer, an administrator each for home missions, world missions, and ministerial education, the coordinator of Congregational Services, the director of the Ministry of Christian Giving, the director of communications, the chief technology officer, and the treasurer. Additional advisory members may be appointed by the chairman as necessary.

- (d) In the event of a vacancy on the Synodical Council, the president shall fill such vacancy until the next convention of the synod or district. In the case of vacancies in district presidents he shall receive the recommendation of the Conference of Presidents and for vacancies in lay members he shall receive the recommendation of the respective district president.
- (e) The Synodical Council, as the legal representative of the synod, shall have free access to all meetings of the governing boards and commissions of the synod.
- (f) The Synodical Council shall have the responsibility for preparing, reviewing, and approving the ministry financial plan recommended to the synod in convention in keeping with fiscal integrity. Although the Synodical Council is responsible for overall fiscal integrity under the direction of the president, the internal management of the institutions, boards, commissions, and other undertakings of the synod shall be generally vested in the respective boards and commissions. The Synodical Council shall weigh and balance the areas of ministry with respect to the synod's resources and mission. The Synodical Council shall be responsible for overall ministry program and plan development, evaluation, coordination, and support allocation. The Synodical Council shall present to each regular synod convention a comprehensive, balanced ministry program and financial plan reflecting a long-range planning process by which the synod may best achieve its objectives in keeping with its resources. To that end it shall: evaluate the program and resources available for each area of ministry on the basis of its contribution to the synod's continuing purpose and objectives; evaluate the contribution each program is making toward the achievement of the synod's objectives; develop and maintain a strategic plan with established priorities; recommend programs and the ministry financial plan to the synod in convention; be accountable for balancing the ministry financial plan; and coordinate the program adopted by the synod in convention, making adjustments in work programs, support allocations, and resource utilization as they become necessary.
- (g) Should the resources at the disposal of the Synodical Council be insufficient to meet all financial obligations of the synod, the Synodical Council is authorized and directed to borrow, at its discretion, the necessary amounts up to such limits as the synod in convention may prescribe. The Synodical Council shall, however, include these activities in its report to the next regular convention of the synod.
- (h) Title to all property, both real and personal, title to all bequests received by the synod, and title to all property acquired by the synod in the future shall be vested in the corporation. The Synodical Council is empowered to represent the synod in all legal matters and have sole authority to execute all legal documents.
- (i) The Synodical Council shall designate the persons who shall sign all legal documents of the synod.
- (j) The Synodical Council shall be responsible for the administration and investment of all synod funds. The Synodical Council shall be responsible for the investment and administration of the assets entrusted to it by the synod. It shall make such conveyances of the properties of the synod in accordance with the policies of the synod and within such limitations as the synod in convention may from time to time prescribe and within such further limitations as may be set forth elsewhere in these bylaws.
- (k) The Synodical Council shall require an annual audit by a certified public accounting firm of the records and accounts of the synod, its schools, Support Services subsidiaries, WELS Retirement Program Commission, WELS VEBA Commission, and all other units identified by the Synodical Council. Such audit shall be performed in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards.

- (l) The Synodical Council shall submit, through the president, to every regular convention of the synod a written report of its activities, the condition of the finances and properties of the synod, and the investment of synodical funds. A similar report shall be presented through the president to the regular district conventions.
- (m) The Synodical Council shall be responsible for keeping an accurate record of the synod's history by maintaining a synodical archive.

**Section 5.10**  
**Synod Operations**

The operations of the synod shall be grouped into five areas of ministry: Home Missions, World Missions, Ministerial Education, Congregation and District Ministry, and Ministry Support, as described elsewhere in these bylaws.

**Section 5.20**  
**Boards, Commissions, and Committees**

- (a) Boards, commissions, and standing committees shall conduct their business using the latest edition of *Robert's Rules of Order* to govern parliamentary procedure.
- (b) Boards, commissions, and standing committees established by these bylaws shall submit reports through the president to all regular conventions of the districts and of the synod.
- (c) After each regular convention of the synod, boards, commissions, and standing committees established by these bylaws shall reorganize, including the election of the appropriate officers and committees.
- (d) Meetings of boards, commissions, and committees may be held at any place as designated in the meeting notice or as the members may establish.
- (e) Meetings of boards, commissions, and committees may be conducted via electronic conference where each member can participate in the discussion and communicate with the other members.
- (f) An action required or permitted by the constitution or bylaws to be taken by boards, commissions, and committees may be taken without a meeting if a consent in writing, setting forth the action so taken, shall be signed by or sent electronically to all of the members entitled to vote on such action.

**Section 5.30**  
**Establishing the Ministry Financial Plan**

- (a) The Synodical Council shall establish a support forecast which shall serve as a basis for determining operating support available for ministry. The forecast for Congregation Mission Offerings shall be established in consultation with the Conference of Presidents.
- (b) In the year in which the convention meets, every area of ministry, ministerial education school, and Ministry Support subsidiary, through its respective administrator or board, shall present to the president its complete ministry financial plan for the next two fiscal years. The plan shall include the use of both operating and special funds, as well as anticipated changes in reserves. The president shall then present a comprehensive ministry financial plan to the Synodical Council.

- (c) The Synodical Council shall review the ministry financial plan proposed by the president, seeing to it that the expenditures do not exceed anticipated support and resources, that the plan reflects the overall purposes and goals of the synod, and that the use of reserves is fiscally responsible.
- (d) The synod in convention shall review ministry financial plan proposed by the Synodical Council, and, after making any desired changes, approve a complete ministry financial plan including the areas of ministry, ministerial education schools, and Support Services subsidiaries that is fiscally responsible.
- (e) At any time during the biennium, if the ministry financial plan approved by the synod in convention would result in expenditures greater than anticipated resources, or if the plan were to become fiscally imprudent, the Synodical Council shall adjust the plan in order that expenditures do not exceed anticipated resources or result in the fiscally imprudent use of those resources.
- (f) At any time during the biennium, an area of ministry, synodical school, or Support Services subsidiary may request the Synodical Council to consider a request to modify the approved plan. The request shall be submitted and considered in accordance with procedures established by the Synodical Council.

### **Section 5.35**

#### **Accounting Oversight Committee**

- (a) There shall be a synod Accounting Oversight Committee that serves the synod and its subsidiaries and affiliates that are under the control of the Synodical Council.
- (b) The committee shall serve under the Synodical Council to assist in ensuring that appropriate accounting policies and internal controls are established and that financial systems are efficient and effective. It shall retain external auditors, assist in ensuring that financial personnel have the requisite skills, and assist in ensuring that financial reports are prepared in a timely manner, accurately and in compliance with generally accepted accounting principles.
- (c) The committee shall be composed of at least four members but not more than seven members. The members shall be appointed by the Synodical Council. One member of the Synodical Council shall serve as an advisory member. The Synodical Council shall appoint one of the members to serve as chairman. The members, other than the Synodical Council's member, shall serve a term of four years and may succeed themselves twice. As far as practical, the terms should be staggered. The members shall be independent in fact and appearance from the management of the synod and its affiliates, shall be financially literate, and at least one member shall be an audit committee financial expert as defined by Securities and Exchange Commission regulations.
- (d) The committee shall keep the Synodical Council informed of its actions and recommendations through the Synodical Council's appointed member. The committee shall keep subsidiary and affiliate boards, commissions and committees informed of its actions and recommendations through the synod chief financial officer.

**Section 5.40**  
**Gifts and Bequests**

- (a) The Synodical Council shall be responsible for all gifts and bequests benefiting the synod's missions and ministries or areas of ministry. If the use of a gift or request is restricted by the donor, the Synodical Council shall ensure that the gift or bequest is used for the restricted purpose insofar as possible. If the restriction placed on a gift is deemed by the Synodical Council impossible to implement, or if the restriction is not in the best interest of the synod, the Synodical Council shall decline the gift.
- (b) Gifts to the synod that are not restricted by the donor will be placed into the Financial Stabilization Fund
- (c) The ministerial education school governing boards and the boards of directors of the Ministry Support subsidiaries shall be responsible for all gifts and bequests benefitting the entity. If the use of the gift is restricted by the donor, the governing board or board of directors shall ensure that the gift or bequest is used only for the restricted purpose insofar as possible.

**Section 5.60**  
**Administrators**

- (a) The administrators for Home Missions, World Missions, and Ministerial Education shall be accountable and reportable to their boards and to the president.
- (b) Administrators shall be advisory, non-voting members of the boards under which they serve.
- (c) Administrators shall execute the decisions of the boards and/or commissions under which they serve.
- (d) Administrators of the synod shall be called in the following manner. Notice of a vacancy shall be published on the official internet site of WELS and/or to congregations by mail or e-mail, and all pastors, professors, male teachers, congregations, and voting members of congregations shall be invited to nominate candidates within 10 days from the date of publication. The list of candidates shall be published on the official internet site of WELS and/or to congregations by mail or e-mail, and the calling board shall call from the published list no earlier than 20 days from the date of publication.

**Section 5.70**  
**Archives**

- (a) The Synodical Council shall establish and maintain an archive, which shall be the repository of documents of historical value.
- (b) The president, officers, administrators, agencies, synodical schools, boards, commissions, and committees of the synod shall transfer documents of historical value such as protocols, records, correspondence, and other pertinent materials to the archives.
- (c) Congregations, schools, and parasynodical organizations and institutions maintained by the members of WELS, because they are a significant portion of the life and work of WELS, shall be encouraged to submit materials of a more general informational and historical nature for preservation.



- (d) The archives shall include a separate file for each of the districts of the synod. The district presidents shall, at their discretion, transfer documents of historical value from their respective districts to be deposited in their district file.
- (e) The archives shall serve as the repository for the records of those congregations of the synod that have been disbanded.
- (f) The archives shall serve as the repository for biographical materials on all of the synod's called workers.
- (g) The archives shall serve as the clearinghouse for the artifacts of historical value. Such artifacts may be retained by the archives for preservation and display, or, at its direction, be forwarded to the WELS Historical Institute.
- (h) The synod president after consultation with the Synodical Council shall shall engage an archivist, who shall serve under the direction of the president or his designee.
- (i) The activities connected with the archives shall be reported to the Synodical Council through the president or his designee.

#### **Section 5.80**

##### **Chief Technology Officer**

- (a) There shall be a chief technology officer who, under the direction of the president, shall have overall responsibility for the technology activities of the synod. These activities include the responsibility for the technical infrastructure and activities of the synod, the security of all synodical information, the development and maintenance of financial systems to support the work of all synod entities, the integrity of synod databases, and provisions for reliable digital communications.
- (b) The chief technology officer shall be hired by the president after consultation with the Synodical Council. He shall be an employee of the synod and accountable to the president.
- (c) The chief technology officer shall be responsible for areas of ministry support assigned to him by the president. He shall be an advisory member of any board, commission, and committee of the synod as assigned by the president or otherwise specified in these bylaws.

#### **HOME MISSIONS**

Home Missions shall have as its purpose the sharing of the gospel of Jesus Christ for the discipling of all people within the domestic mission fields of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

#### **Section 6.00**

##### **Board for Home Missions**

- (a) There shall be a Board for Home Missions that shall direct the home mission program of the synod. It shall counsel, direct, and support all the districts in their home mission activities, including campus and multicultural ministries.
- (b) The board shall be composed of a chairman together with a pastor and a lay member of each district mission board.

- (c) The chairman of the board shall be a parish pastor elected by the synod for a term of four years from a slate of candidates proposed by the Nominating Committee of the synod. He may succeed himself twice. He is responsible and accountable to the board and to the Synodical Council through the president.
- (d) The executive committee of the board shall be elected from the board members and shall have the authority as prescribed by the board to act on behalf of the board between meetings.
- (e) The board shall primarily coordinate, balance, and facilitate the home mission activities of the synod. Any mission request originating in a district shall first be approved by the respective district mission board for presentation to the board.
- (f) At least every four years the board shall review the mission, objective, and policy statements, or equivalent, of the board and each unit to determine whether each is operating within its assignment.

#### **Section 6.04**

##### **Mission Districts and District Mission Boards**

- (a) Each synodical district shall be a mission district unless otherwise established.
- (b) A synodical district may recommend to the synod the establishment of more than one mission district within that district for better administration of missions within the district. The establishment of a mission district that includes portions of more than one district may also be recommended to the synod by the respective districts.
- (c) There shall be a district mission board to carry out home mission activities in each mission district. The board shall be vested with the direct administration and supervision of the missions and mission work within its district, subject to such guidelines as the Board for Home Missions may adopt.
- (d) The board for each mission district shall be elected by the mission district and be composed of as many pastors, teachers, and laymen as the mission district may from time to time determine. The members shall be elected for a term of four years and may succeed themselves twice.
- (e) The board shall present periodic reports to the Board for Home Missions and shall submit its report to the Board for Home Missions for approval.
- (f) A pastor and a layman from that board shall be members of the Board for Home Missions and shall be directly responsible to it.

#### **WORLD MISSIONS**

World Missions shall have as its purpose the sharing of the gospel of Jesus Christ for the discipling of all people living in countries outside the United States of America and Canada and of those people who, because of cultural barriers, have not been made the responsibility of other agencies within the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

**Section 6.16**  
**Board for World Missions**

- (a) There shall be a Board for World Missions responsible for directing the world mission program of the synod. It shall review all requests for overseas assistance, provide guidance for smaller church bodies, and evaluate exploratory work for potential world mission expansion. It shall also counsel, direct, coordinate, and balance the work of its administrative committees who shall be responsible to the administrator of the board for the management of their respective fields.
- (b) The board shall be composed of a chairman and four members elected by the synod. Each member shall have significant cross-cultural experience.
- (c) The chairman of the board shall be a pastor elected by the synod for a term of four years from a slate of candidates proposed by the Nominating Committee. He may succeed himself twice. He is responsible and accountable to the board and to the Synodical Council through the president.
- (d) The remaining four men shall consist of one pastor, two laymen, and one teacher and be elected for terms of four years from a slate of candidates proposed by the Nominating Committee of the synod and may succeed themselves twice.
- (e) The board calls its own administrator, who, as the board's advisor, originates policy and ministry financial plan allocation proposals for board approval. He also recommends to the board the appointment of administrative committee members.
- (f) The board is responsible for establishing the policies under which the administrative committees shall operate. Within the framework of such policies and resolutions adopted by the board, the administrative committees shall be responsible for the management of their fields.
- (g) At least biennially the board shall review the mission, objective, and policy statements, or equivalent, of the board and each unit to determine whether each is operating within its assignment.
- (h) The management of world mission fields shall be vested in administrative committees.
- (i) The number of the administrative committees shall be determined by the Board for World Missions. The size of the administrative committees shall be five members composed of two pastors, one teacher, and two laymen or three members composed of one pastor, one teacher, and one layman.
- (j) Members of the administrative committees shall be appointed by the board with input from the administrator for a term of four years. A member may succeed himself twice. Insofar as is practicable, the membership shall represent diverse geographic areas.

**Section 6.20**  
**World Missionaries**

World missionaries and male teachers in overseas world mission fields shall be members of the district in which they held their previous call unless they request transfer to another district. Graduates of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary who enter an overseas world mission field immediately shall be members of their home districts unless they request transfer to another district. In disciplinary actions, however, jurisdiction shall be exercised as outlined in Section 8.20(g).

## **MINISTERIAL EDUCATION**

Ministerial Education shall have as its purpose the coordination of efforts by the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod to provide a preaching and teaching ministry qualified to proclaim the gospel faithfully and universally in accord with the Lutheran Confessions.

### **Section 6.32**

#### **Board for Ministerial Education**

- (a) There shall be a Board for Ministerial Education that shall be responsible for establishing overall policy, for long-range planning, and for supervising the educational programs of the schools so that they individually and collectively fulfill the mission given to them by the synod. As such the board shall:
1. provide for the efficient and effective administration of Ministerial Education and its units;
  2. coordinate recruitment and retention of students who will serve in the public ministry of the synod;
  3. cooperate with the governing boards in the calling and maintaining of qualified teaching staffs for the ministerial schools, with the local boards issuing the calls;
  4. coordinate all the curricula of the schools primarily for the thorough and effective lifelong education of future pastors, teachers and staff ministers and pastors, teachers and staff ministers now in service;
  5. cooperate with the governing boards, the Synodical Council, and the Conference of Presidents to coordinate, plan, and implement approved programs for the construction and/or acquisition as well as maintenance of adequate physical facilities and property of the schools;
  6. cooperate with the governing boards, the Synodical Council, and the Conference of Presidents in providing competent, non-called staffs for the efficient operation of the schools;
  7. correlate the fiscal needs of Ministerial Education and of its respective units with the overall program of the synod;
  8. establish, coordinate, and clarify policies by which the units of Ministerial Education will be guided in their program, with local boards establishing local policies that are not in conflict with the Board for Ministerial Education policies;
  9. review at least every four years the mission, objectives, and vision statement, or equivalent, of the board and each unit to determine whether each is operating within its assignment; and
  10. assist in and help coordinate the area Lutheran high schools' ministerial education programs.
- (b) The board shall be composed of a chairman who shall be a parish pastor, one parish pastor, two teachers, one representative from the area Lutheran high schools, four laymen, and the chairmen of the governing boards of the synod's ministerial schools. The members shall be elected by the synod for a term of four years from a slate of candidates proposed by the Nominating Committee. They may succeed themselves twice.
- (c) Of the two teachers, one shall be from the upper Midwest districts (Michigan, Minnesota, Northern Wisconsin, Southeastern Wisconsin, Western Wisconsin), and one from any of the other districts. Of the four laymen, at least one shall be from a district other than the upper Midwest districts.
- (d) The board chairman shall be elected by the synod to a four-year term and shall be eligible to succeed himself twice. He is responsible and accountable to the board and to the Synodical Council through the president.

- (e) The advisory members of the Board for Ministerial Education shall consist of the president of the synod, the presidents of the ministerial education schools, the administrator of the Board for Ministerial Education, and the synod's Chief Financial Officer.
- (f) The executive committee of the board shall be elected from the board members and shall have the authority as prescribed by the board to act on behalf of the board between meetings.

#### **Section 6.34**

##### **Governing Board of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary**

- (a) For the government and administration of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wisconsin, there shall be a board of eight members, composed of the chairman who shall be a parish pastor, three parish pastors, one teacher, and three laymen.
- (b) The terms for all members of the governing board shall be four years. They may succeed themselves twice. The president of the synod shall appoint a man to fill a vacancy that occurs in the office of the governing board chairman between elections. The appropriate district president shall appoint men to fill vacancies that occur among the governing board members between elections. If a man moves to another district, the district president may allow the man to complete his term.
- (c) The chairman of the governing board shall be elected by the synod in convention from a slate of candidates prepared by the Nominating Committee of the synod. The election of the chairmen of the governing boards of the synod's theological seminary, its college, and its preparatory schools shall be staggered at two-year intervals.
- (d) The districts shall elect the seven remaining members of the governing board from a slate of candidates prepared by the district Nominating Committees in accord with the pastor/teacher/lay distribution as determined by the synod's Nominating Committee.
- (e) Five members of the governing board shall be elected by the upper Midwest districts (one each from Michigan, Minnesota, Northern Wisconsin, Southeastern Wisconsin, and Western Wisconsin Districts). Two members of the governing board shall be elected from two of the seven non-upper Midwest districts.
- (f) The election of governing board members shall be staggered at two-year intervals with all elections for members from non-upper Midwest districts held in the same year. Following the regular conventions of the districts, three, respectively two, members shall retire from the governing board after their successors have been elected.
- (g) The district president of the Southeastern Wisconsin District, within whose jurisdiction Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary is situated, shall be an advisory member of the governing board. The administrator of the Board for Ministerial Education shall be an advisory member of the governing board.

#### **Section 6.36**

##### **Governing Board of Martin Luther College**

- (a) For the government and administration of Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minnesota, there shall be a governing board of thirteen members, composed of the chairman who shall be a parish pastor, and twelve others who shall be a mixture of pastors, teachers, and laymen. The aggregate number of governing board members shall include as balanced as possible a mixture of pastors, teachers, and laymen.

- (b) The terms for all members of the governing board shall be four years. They may succeed themselves twice. The president of the synod shall appoint a man to fill a vacancy that occurs in the office of the governing board chairman between elections. The appropriate district president shall appoint men to fill vacancies that occur among the governing board members between elections. If a man moves to another district, the district president may allow the man to complete his term.
- (c) The chairman of the governing board shall be elected by the synod in convention from a slate of candidates prepared by the Nominating Committee of the synod. The election for the chairmen of the governing boards of the synod's theological seminary, its college, and its preparatory schools shall be staggered at two-year intervals.
- (d) Nine members of the governing board shall be elected by the upper Midwest districts (two each from the Minnesota, Northern Wisconsin, Southeastern Wisconsin, and Western Wisconsin Districts and one from the Michigan District). The three remaining members of the governing board shall be elected from three of the seven non-upper Midwest districts in accord with the pastor/teacher/lay distribution as determined by the Nominating Committee.
- (e) The election of governing board members shall be staggered at two-year intervals. Following the regular conventions of the districts, four members shall retire from the governing board after their successors have been elected.
- (f) The district president of the Minnesota District, within whose jurisdiction Martin Luther College is situated, shall be an advisory member of the governing board. The administrator of the Board for Ministerial Education shall be an advisory member of the governing board.

### **Section 6.38**

#### **Governing Boards of the Preparatory Schools**

- (a) For the government and administration of Luther Preparatory School, Watertown, Wisconsin, and Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw, Michigan, there shall be boards of eight members, composed of the chairman who shall be a parish pastor, three parish pastors, two teachers, and two laymen.
- (b) The terms for all members of the governing boards shall be four years. They may succeed themselves twice. The president of the synod shall appoint a man to fill a vacancy that occurs in the office of the governing board chairman between elections. The appropriate district president shall appoint men to fill vacancies that occur among the governing board members between elections. If a man moves to another district, the district president may allow the man to complete his term.
- (c) The chairmen of the governing board shall be elected by the synod in convention from a slate of candidates prepared by the Nominating Committee of the synod. The election for the chairmen of the governing boards of the synod's theological seminary, its college, and its preparatory schools shall be staggered at two-year intervals.
- (d) The districts shall elect the seven remaining members of the governing boards from a slate of candidates prepared by the district nominating committees in accord with the pastor/teacher/lay distribution as determined by the synod's Nominating Committee.

- (e) Five members of the governing boards shall be elected by the upper Midwest districts (one each from Michigan, Minnesota, Northern Wisconsin, Southeastern Wisconsin, and Western Wisconsin Districts). Two members of the governing boards shall be elected from two of the seven non-upper Midwest districts.
- (f) The election of governing board members shall be staggered at two-year intervals with elections for members from non-upper Midwest districts held in the same year. Following the regular conventions of the districts, three, respectively two, members shall retire from each governing board after their successors have been elected.
- (g) District presidents within whose jurisdiction the preparatory schools of the synod are situated shall be advisory members of the governing boards. The administrator of the Board for Ministerial Education shall be an advisory member of the governing boards.

#### **Section 6.40**

##### **Authority of the Governing Boards**

The internal affairs of the ministerial schools and their administration shall be subject solely to the authority of the governing boards unless the item is governed by synod convention resolutions and/or Synodical Council policy and procedures. Each ministerial school is a part of the ministerial education system, which is governed and administered by the Board for Ministerial Education.

#### **Section 6.44**

##### **Duties of Presidents of Ministerial Schools**

- (a) The president of a ministerial school shall be the chief executive officer of the school. He shall provide operational supervision to its departments and ensure that the synod's and the school's assets are maintained and safeguarded.
- (b) Department heads shall administer their departments. The president, however, shall have access to all records, meetings, and correspondence pertaining to each department. In case of disagreement the decision of the president shall be final, pending an appeal to the school's governing board.
- (c) The president shall work toward achieving the main purpose of the ministerial school in all its departments by providing Christian training and thorough scholarship to cultivate the spiritual, mental, and physical growth of the students.
- (d) The president shall be the official representative of the ministerial school. He shall report regularly to the governing board and execute its decisions. The president shall be an advisory member of the governing board.
- (e) The president shall call and conduct regular meetings of the faculty. At his discretion he may, or at the request of two or more faculty members he shall, call special meetings of the faculty.
- (f) In collaboration with the faculty, the president shall determine the courses of study and shall assign them to the members of the faculty. In case of disagreement among the members of the faculty, the decision shall rest with the president. No changes in the basic curriculum shall be made without the approval of the governing board.

**Section 6.48**  
**Calling Procedure**

- (a) The calling of professors to the ministerial schools shall be conducted by the governing board.
- (b) In the case of Martin Luther College and Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, the governing board of the school in which a vacancy may have occurred shall publish such vacancy on the official internet site of WELS and/or to congregations by mail and shall request the nomination of qualified candidates.
- (c) All pastors, male professors, male teachers, congregations, and voting members of congregations shall be entitled to nominate a candidate or candidates within 10 days from the date of publication of the vacancy. The submitted names shall be published on the official Internet site of WELS and/or to congregations by mail or e-mail the first business day after nominations close. The calling board may issue a request for additional candidates at any time. Additional names may be submitted to or by the president of the district in which the school is located at any time.
- (d) In the case of the prep schools, the president of the district in which the school is located shall prepare a call list for the school's governing board. Individuals or congregations may submit names to the district president for consideration as he assembles the call list.
- (e) Presidents of the ministerial schools shall be called in accordance with the procedure for the calling of administrators of the synod as outlined in section 5.60.

**WELS CHRISTIAN AID AND RELIEF**

**Section 6.92**

**WELS Christian Aid and Relief**

- (a) There shall be a commission that will serve under the Synodical Council to assist them in administering any program of disaster relief, special assistance to those in need, or humanitarian aid projects undertaken by the synod.
- (b) The name of this commission shall be "WELS Christian Aid and Relief."
- (c) The commission shall consist of five members appointed by the president for a term of four years. The terms shall be staggered. At least one of the members shall be appointed in consultation with the Board for World Missions. Commission members may succeed themselves twice. Insofar as practicable, the members shall represent diverse geographic areas.
- (d) One of the commission members shall be appointed by the president to serve as chairman.
- (e) The commission, with the approval of the president, shall make provisions for appropriate administrative and support staff.
- (f) The commission, with the approval of the president, shall advise the constituency of the synod as to needs that, in the judgment of the commission, should be the object of relief appeals within the synod.
- (g) The commission shall report to the president or his designee and shall provide to the Synodical Council at least annually a report of all expenditures for disaster relief, special assistance to those in need, and humanitarian aid.



## **SUBSIDIARIES AND SUPPORT SERVICES**

Support Services includes the entities contained in Section 7.00-7.99 of the bylaws, as well as, but is not limited to accounting, archives/history, benefit plans, finance, human resources, legal, lending, planning, real estate, revenue forecasting, and technology. These areas are responsible and accountable to the Synodical Council through the president or his designee.

### **Section 7.00**

#### **Northwestern Publishing House**

- (a) There shall be a subsidiary corporation named Northwestern Publishing House that shall serve the Synodical Council by publishing and providing biblically sound materials that communicate, foster, and support the Christian faith and life of WELS members and non-members.
- (b) Northwestern Publishing House will be governed by a board of directors appointed by the Synodical Council. The board of directors will consist of two parish pastors, one professor from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, one professor from Martin Luther College, one elementary or secondary teacher, and four laymen with retail, marketing, finance, legal, technology, and/or other appropriate professional backgrounds. Directors will serve for a term of four years and may succeed themselves twice. Insofar as practical, the directors' terms shall be staggered. The president's designee, if one is appointed per 7.00(g), shall be an ex-officio member of the board of directors.
- (c) The Northwestern Publishing House board of directors shall adopt such policies as it may deem necessary and advisable for the operation of the corporation. Any changes in the corporation's articles of incorporation or bylaws shall be subject to the approval of the Synodical Council.
- (d) All of Northwestern Publishing House's proprietary publications shall contain only materials that are doctrinally correct. To that end, it will submit them to the Publication Review Committee for review. Northwestern Publishing House shall screen all other products it offers for sale, reviewing them for theological content.
- (e) Northwestern Publishing House as the primary synod publisher shall coordinate its publishing plans with those of the synod's boards and commissions through the Publication Coordinating Commission.
- (f) Northwestern Publishing House shall function as a self-supporting, self-funded operation. Northwestern Publishing House shall use net income generated to fund its own operation without synod subsidy, to expand its operation, to develop new products, and to assist in funding joint publishing projects with the synod's boards and commissions.
- (g) For oversight purposes, the corporation shall report to the Synodical Council through the synod president or his designee. The synod president may select a designee to provide operational oversight to the synod employees assigned to the corporation.

### **Section 7.10**

#### **WELS Church Extension Fund, Inc.**

- (a) There shall be a subsidiary corporation named WELS Church Extension Fund, Inc. organized for religious, charitable, and educational purposes, consistent with the principles of the synod. The corporation shall serve the Synodical Council through the sale of investments and receipt of gifts to provide loans and grants to mission congregations for parsonages, land, and other necessary facilities and grants to Home Missions. Loans made to mission congregations require the recommendation of the Board for Home Missions. Subject to any conditions contained in its bylaws, the corporation may also make loans to non-mission congregations and to World Missions.
- (b) The membership, term of office, and manner of election of the board of directors of this corporation shall be prescribed by the articles of incorporation or bylaws of the corporation. The president's designee, if one is appointed per 7.10(e), shall be an ex-officio member of the board of directors.
- (c) Any changes in the corporation's articles of incorporation or bylaws shall be subject to the approval of the Synodical Council.
- (d) The board of directors of the corporation shall adopt such rules and regulations as it may deem necessary and advisable for the operation of the corporation.
- (e) For oversight purposes the corporation shall report to the Synodical Council through the synod president or his designee. The synod president may select a designee to provide operational oversight to the synod employees assigned to the corporation.

### **Section 7.20**

#### **WELS Foundation, Inc.**

- (a) There shall be a subsidiary corporation named WELS Foundation, Inc. The corporation shall serve the Synodical Council by organizing exclusively to provide, direct, channel, and manage funds for religious, charitable, and educational purposes consistent with the principles of the synod.
- (b) The membership, term of office, and manner of election of the board of directors shall be prescribed by the articles of incorporation or bylaws of the corporation. The president's designee, if one is appointed per 7.20(e), shall be an ex-officio member of the board of directors.
- (c) Any changes in the corporation's articles of incorporation or bylaws shall be subject to the approval of the Synodical Council.
- (d) The board of directors of the corporation shall adopt such rules and regulations as it may deem necessary and advisable for the operation of the corporation.
- (e) For oversight purposes, the corporation shall report to the Synodical Council through the synod president or his designee. The synod president may select a designee to provide operational oversight to the synod employees assigned to the corporation.

### **Section 7.30**

#### **WELS Investment Funds, Inc.**

- (a) There shall be a subsidiary corporation named WELS Investment Funds, Inc. The corporation shall serve under the Synodical Council by providing investment portfolios for the benefit of the synod and its affiliated organizations.
- (b) The membership, term of office, and manner of election of the board of directors shall be prescribed by the articles of incorporation or bylaws of the corporation. The president's designee, if one is appointed per 7.30(g), shall be an ex-officio member of the board of directors.
- (c) Any changes in the corporation's articles of incorporation or bylaws shall be subject to the approval of the Synodical Council.
- (d) The board of directors of the corporation shall adopt such rules and regulations as it may deem necessary and advisable for the operation of the corporation.
- (e) The board of directors shall draw up its own investment objectives and guidelines subject to the approval of the Synodical Council. The investment objectives and guidelines shall be reviewed at least annually by the board of directors and the Synodical Council.
- (f) WELS Investment Funds shall function as a self-supporting organization. Operational expenses of WELS Investment Funds shall be allocated to its investment portfolios. WELS and its affiliated organizations shall be encouraged to utilize the investment portfolios provided by WELS Investment Funds.
- (g) For oversight purposes the corporation shall report to the Synodical Council through the synod president or his designee. The synod president may select a designee to provide operational oversight to the synod employees assigned to the corporation.

### **Section 7.40**

#### **WELS Retirement Program Commission**

- (a) There shall be a WELS Retirement Program Commission that shall serve the Synodical Council by administering the synod's retirement program, including the synod's pension plan and the synod's 403(b)(9) retirement income account plan (the "Plans"), in keeping with the Plan document(s) approved by the Synodical Council.
- (b) The commission shall consist of one pastor, one teacher and four laymen appointed by the Synodical Council. Appointments shall be for a term of four years. Members may succeed themselves twice. The president's designee, if one is appointed per 7.40(d), shall be an ex-officio member of the board of directors.
- (c) The commission shall develop its own investment objectives and guidelines subject to the approval of the Synodical Council. The investment objectives and guidelines shall be reviewed at least annually by the commission and the Synodical Council. The commission shall develop the pension plan's benefit basis subject to the approval of the Synodical Council. The pension plan's benefit basis shall be reviewed at least annually by the commission and the Synodical Council. The commission shall also adopt such other policies it may deem necessary and advisable for the operation of the Plans.

- (d) For oversight purposes, the commission shall report to the Synodical Council through the synod president or his designee. The synod president may select a designee to provide operational oversight to the synod employees assigned to the commission.

**Section 7.50**  
**WELS VEBA Commission**

- (a) There shall be a WELS Voluntary Employees Beneficiary Association (VEBA) Commission that shall serve the Synodical Council by operating and administering the group medical plan(s) approved by the Synodical Council for the benefit of the synod's workers and such other workers within the synod who may qualify under the plan(s).
- (b) The commission shall consist of one pastor, one teacher, and four laymen appointed by the Synodical Council. Appointments shall be for a term of four years. Members may succeed themselves twice. The president's designee, if one is appointed per 7.50(d), shall be an ex-officio member of the board of directors.
- (c) The commission shall study and implement new procedures or make improvements in the plans, in accordance with proper procedure and sound fiscal management. The plans shall be reviewed at least annually by the commission and the Synodical Council. The commission shall develop its own investment objectives and guidelines subject to the approval of the Synodical Council. The investment objectives and guidelines shall be reviewed at least annually by the commission and the Synodical Council. The commission shall also adopt such other policies it may deem necessary and advisable for the operation of the plan.
- (d) For oversight purposes the commission shall report to the Synodical Council through the synod president or his designee. The synod president may select a designee to provide operational oversight to the synod employees assigned to the commission.

**Section 7.70**  
**WELS Historical Institute**

- (a) There shall be a subsidiary corporation named WELS Historical Institute that shall serve the Synodical Council by fostering and promoting interest in the history of Lutheranism, especially WELS.
- (b) The makeup, term of office and manner of election of the board of directors of this corporation shall be prescribed by the articles of incorporation or bylaws of the corporation. The president's designee, if one is appointed per 7.70(d), shall be an ex-officio member of the board of directors.
- (c) Any change in the corporation's articles of incorporation or bylaws shall be subject to the approval of the Synodical Council. The board of directors of the corporation shall adopt such rules and regulations as it may deem necessary and advisable for the operation of the corporation.
- (d) For oversight purposes the corporation shall report to the Synodical Council through the synod president or his designee.

## **DISCIPLINE AND APPEALS**

### **Section 8.00**

#### **Jurisdiction and Procedure in Removal of Synod Elected and Appointed Officers, Board, Commission, and Committee Members; Ministries; and Affiliated Ministries**

- (a) In the case of the synod president, the first and second vice presidents with the concurrence of the Conference of Presidents and the Synodical Council may remove the president from his office. The president shall have 30 days thereafter to appeal this removal. If he appeals, the appeal is initially submitted to the acting synod president, who shall, within five days of receipt, forward the appeal to the Synod Board of Appeals.
- (b) In the case of the synod first and second vice presidents and the recording secretary, the president with the concurrence of the other two elected officers, the Conference of Presidents, and the Synodical Council may remove another officer from his office. The officer shall have 30 days thereafter to appeal this removal. If he appeals, the appeal is initially submitted to the synod president, who shall, within five days of receipt, forward the appeal to the Synod Board of Appeals.
- (c) In the case of removal from office of synod board, commission, or committee member: the board, commission, or committee may remove a member from his position. The member shall have 30 days thereafter to appeal this removal. If he appeals, the appeal is initially submitted to the synod president, who shall, within five days of receipt, forward the appeal to the Synod Board of Appeals.
- (d) In the case of ministries and affiliated ministries whose ministries cross district lines or which serve the broader synod, oversight of doctrine and practice is the initial responsibility of the praesidium of the district in which the headquarters of the organization is located, and, ultimately, with the Conference of Presidents.
- (e) In all cases of removal, the responsible entity shall provide written confirmation to the individual or group removed within seven days of removal. Any removal requires the cessation of all duties and responsibilities while the appeal process, if any, is being carried out. The responsible entity shall report the removal to the synod via the call report and other appropriate means of communication.
- (f) The conduct of the review shall rest solely with the discretion of the Synod Board of Appeals.

### **Section 8.10**

#### **Synod Board of Appeals**

- (a) The Synod Board of Appeals shall be composed of 10 members: a chairman, three pastors, three teachers, and three laymen. The Synod Board of Appeals shall be elected by the synod in convention from a slate of candidates submitted by the synod's Nominating Committee. The chairman shall be a pastor. Members' terms shall be for four years and they may succeed themselves twice. Terms shall be staggered. Members of the Synod Board of Appeals may hold other elective or appointive offices.
- (b) A five-person Board of Appeals panel shall be formed to decide each appeal. The chairman or his designee plus four board members selected by the chairman shall make up a Board of Appeals panel. Each panel must include at least one pastor, one teacher, and one lay member.

- (c) The panel is to act independently as it considers the appeal. It has the right and responsibility to review all documentary evidence. It has the right to conduct interviews and to request additional information from anyone it deems to be connected to the matter. It has the responsibility to rule whether the disciplinary action was justified in its substance and whether the process followed was in keeping with biblical principles and with any applicable bylaws.
- (d) All correspondence and documentary evidence relative to a disciplinary action together with a summary report shall be filed in the office of the president within 30 days after the appeal has been concluded with a copy of the summary report forwarded to the removing entity and the appellant. The decision of a Board of Appeals panel shall be the final disposition of an appeal.

### **Section 8.20**

#### **Jurisdiction and Procedure in Disciplinary Actions and Removal from Office at the District Level**

- (a) In cases of discipline among pastors, teachers, and congregations of both self-supporting and mission status, the district in which such pastors, teachers, and congregations hold membership and/or serve shall exercise original jurisdiction. The Synod Board of Appeals shall exercise appellate jurisdiction.
- (b) In cases of discipline among the faculties of the synodical schools or the area Lutheran high schools and administrators of synodical boards and commissions, the respective board or commission shall exercise original jurisdiction. The district in which the appellant is a member and/or serves and the Synod Board of Appeals shall exercise appellate jurisdiction successively.
- (c) The two district vice presidents with the concurrence of the district circuit pastors may remove the district president from his office. The president shall have 30 days thereafter to appeal this removal. If the president appeals, the appeal will be heard by the District Board of Appeals. The Synod Board of Appeals shall exercise appellate jurisdiction.
- (d) In the case of district vice presidents and secretary, the district president with the concurrence of the circuit pastors may remove another officer. The district officer shall have 30 days thereafter to appeal this removal. If he appeals, the appeal will be heard by the District Board of Appeals. The Synod Board of Appeals shall exercise appellate jurisdiction.
- (e) In the case of a congregation, ministry, or affiliated ministry operating within one district, it may become necessary for the district through its praesidium, after consultation with the Conference of Presidents, to remove the congregation, ministry, or affiliated ministry from membership in or affiliation with the synod for cause. The group shall have 30 days to appeal this removal. If the group appeals, the appeal shall be heard by the District Board of Appeals. The decision of the District Board of Appeals may be appealed to the Synod Board of Appeals.
- (f) The conduct of review shall rest with the District Board of Appeals. The decision of the District Board of Appeals may be appealed to the Synod Board of Appeals. Upon appeal, the Synod Board of Appeals may review the action of the District Board of Appeals.
- (g) In the case of removal from office of district board, commission, or committee members, the board, commission, or committee may remove a member from his position. The member shall have 30 days to appeal the removal. If he appeals, the appeal will be heard by the District Board of Appeals. The decision of the District Board of Appeals may be appealed to the Synod Board of Appeals. Upon appeal, the Synod Board of Appeals may review the action of the District Board of Appeals.

- (h) In cases of discipline among missionaries under the jurisdiction of the Board for World Missions, the respective administrative committee shall exercise original jurisdiction. The Board for World Missions, the District Board of Appeals and the Synod Board of Appeals shall exercise appellate jurisdiction successively.
- (i) With the exception of appeals by laymen who are disciplined by their congregations, all appeals shall be submitted to the synod president who shall forward them to the appropriate Board of Appeals.
- (j) In all cases of removal, the responsible entity shall provide written confirmation to the individual or group removed within seven days. Any removal requires the cessation of all duties and responsibilities while the appeal process, if any, is being carried out. The responsible entity shall report the removal to the synod via the call report and other appropriate means of communication.

### **Section 8.30**

#### **District Board of Appeals**

- (a) The District Board of Appeals shall be composed of 10 members: a chairman, three pastors, three teachers, and three laymen. It shall be elected by the district in convention from a slate of candidates submitted by the district's nominating committee. The chairman shall be a pastor. Their term shall be for four years and they may succeed themselves twice. Terms shall be staggered. Members of the District Board of Appeals may hold other elective or appointive offices.
- (b) A five-person Board of Appeals panel shall be formed to decide each appeal. The chairman or his designee plus four board members selected by the chairman shall make up a Board of Appeals panel. Each panel must include at least one pastor, one teacher, and one lay member.
- (c) The panel is to act independently as it considers the appeal. It has the right and responsibility to review all documentary evidence. It has the right to conduct interviews and to request additional information from anyone it deems to be connected to the matter. It has the responsibility to rule whether the disciplinary action was justified in its substance and whether the process followed was in keeping with biblical principles and with any applicable bylaws.
- (d) All correspondence and documentary evidence relative to a disciplinary action together with a summary report shall be filed in the office of the district president within 30 days after such action has been concluded with a copy of the summary report forwarded to the removing entity and the appellant. The decision of a Board of Appeals panel shall be the final disposition of an appeal unless, when possible, an appeal is made to the Synod Board of Appeals. The decision of the District Board of Appeals shall be respected by all the members of the Synod, even while an appeal may be made to the Synod Board of Appeals.

### **Section 8.40**

#### **Rights of the Disciplined Party**

- (a) Any person or congregation that has been disciplined under Section 8.20 shall be notified in writing by the district president of the right of appeal under Sections 8.20 and 8.30 of the bylaws within 30 days of completion of the disciplinary action. A copy of these sections shall be included in the letter.

- (b) The disciplined party shall have 30 days to appeal the action. To exercise the right of appeal the disciplined party shall file notice of appeal with the synod president within 30 days of the notification of the right of appeal. The synod president shall forward the appeal to the appropriate Board of Appeals.

#### **Section 8.50**

##### **Appeals by Laypersons**

- (a) A layperson who has been subject to a disciplinary action by a congregation shall have the right to appeal the action. The layperson shall be notified in writing by the congregation of the right of appeal to the District Board of Appeals. Such notification shall occur within 30 days of the completion of the disciplinary action. Such appeal must be filed with the district president in writing, with a copy to the congregation, within 30 days of the notice of disciplinary action.
- (b) Upon receipt of the appellant's request, the district president shall notify the District Board of Appeals.
- (c) The constitution for the districts affirms that "in intracongregational matters the district shall have purely advisory authority" (Article IX, Section 2). The review shall be conducted, therefore, to determine whether the process leading to the disciplinary action and the doctrinal basis of the disciplinary action were scriptural.
- (d) The conduct of the review shall rest solely with the District Board of Appeals. The board shall have the right and power to examine all documentary evidence and to require such testimony that, in its judgment, is relevant.
- (e) The District Board of Appeals shall submit its decision in writing to the appellant with a copy to the disciplining body, circuit pastor, and district president. The decision of the District Board of Appeals shall be the final disposition of the appeal.
- (f) Within 30 days of the board's decision, the complete records of the board shall be filed with the district president, who shall act, if necessary, in accordance with his responsibility for the district's doctrine and practice.

#### **Section 8.60**

##### **Appeals after Removal from Office**

- (a) A pastor or teacher who has been removed from office because of "established inability to perform the duties of his/her office" (*Model Constitution and Bylaws for Congregations of the WELS, 1997, Article IX, Section 2*) shall have the right to have the action reviewed by the District and Synod Board of Appeals successively. The request for review must be filed in writing within 30 days of the notice of removal from office. The request for review is to be addressed to the president of the synod who shall notify the appropriate Board of Appeals.
- (b) The conduct of the review shall rest solely with the District Board of Appeals. It has the right and responsibility to review all documentary evidence. It has the right to conduct interviews and to request additional information from anyone it deems to be connected to the matter. It has the responsibility to rule whether the disciplinary action was justified in its substance and whether the process followed was in keeping with biblical principles and with any applicable bylaws.
- (c) If the board rules in favor of the pastor or teacher who has been removed, the pastor or teacher shall be restored to the official list of pastors and teachers and declared eligible for a call into the ministry.



- (d) If the board rules against the pastor or teacher who has been removed, the pastor or teacher shall have the right to appeal to the Synod Board of Appeals through the synod president within 30 days of notification of the action by the District Board.
- (e) Upon appeal of either party, the Synod Board of Appeals may review the action of the District Board of Appeals. The records of the district board's proceedings shall be used as a basis for any review. It has the right and responsibility to review all documentary evidence. It has the right to conduct interviews and to request additional information from anyone it deems to be connected to the matter. It has the responsibility to rule whether the disciplinary action was justified in its substance and whether the process followed was in keeping with biblical principles and with any applicable bylaws.
- (f) The decision of the Synod Board of Appeals shall be the final disposition of the case.

# CONSTITUTION FOR THE DISTRICTS

## ARTICLE I

### Name

This district shall be called "The \_\_\_\_\_ District of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod."

## ARTICLE II

### Confession

**Section 1.** This district accepts the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments as the divinely inspired and inerrant word of God and submits to this as the only infallible authority in all matters of doctrine and practice.

**Section 2.** The district also accepts the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church contained in the Book of Concord of 1580, not insofar as, but because they are a correct presentation and exposition of the pure doctrine of the word of God.

## ARTICLE III

### Purpose

The district shall supervise doctrine and practice in the district, receive new congregations into the district, receive pastors and male teachers into the district, conduct elections in the district, review and provide reaction to the reports of the synod president on the activities of the synod on behalf of the membership, and conduct discipline and hear appeals within the district.

## ARTICLE IV

### Membership

**Section 1.** Voting members of this district shall be a) all congregations who shall have joined the district, and b) all pastors and male teachers who shall have joined the district.

**Section 2.** Membership in the district shall be restricted to congregations, pastors and male teachers who agree in doctrine and practice with the confession set forth in Article II of this Constitution.

## ARTICLE V

### Application for Membership

**Section 1.** Pastors and male teachers are members of a district upon acceptance of a call into that district.

**Section 2.** A congregation desiring membership in this district shall pass a resolution to that effect in a duly constituted meeting. It shall submit its application in writing to the president of the district and at the same time shall present two copies of its constitution and bylaws for approval.

**Section 3.** Pastors and male teachers from church bodies not in fellowship with the synod applying for membership in this district shall submit a written application to the president of the district. Notice of such application shall be published at least twice in *Forward in Christ*. A colloquium committee, appointed by the president of the synod, shall be composed of the district president, a professor from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, and a vice president of the synod. The vice president shall be chairman of the committee. If the applicant is approved by the Colloquium Committee, notice of such approval shall be published in *Forward in Christ*.

**Section 4.** New members shall be admitted by the district at its regular conventions or upon recommendation of the district president at a regular convention of the synod in such years when the district does not convene.

**Article VI  
Officers**

**Section 1.** The officers of this district shall be a president, two vice presidents and a secretary. These officers shall be elected for a term of two years at a regular convention of the district with no limitation on the number of terms.

**Section 2.** The officers of the district shall always be nominated and elected by ballot. A majority of the votes shall be necessary for election. The nominating ballot shall not be declared an election.

**Section 3.** The nomination and election of the president and of the first and the second vice presidents shall be held separately. The president shall be elected first and thereafter the vice-presidents. The four nominees who shall have received the largest number of votes on the nominating ballot for president shall be the candidates. If no candidate receives the majority of the votes cast on the first ballot, the name of the nominee receiving the smallest number of votes shall be stricken and a new ballot shall be taken. The balloting shall continue in this manner until one candidate shall have received the majority of the votes cast.

**Section 4.** Nomination and election for the offices of first vice-president, second vice-president, and secretary shall follow the same procedure as followed in the nomination and election of the president, except that the three nominees who shall have received the largest number of votes on the nominating ballot for the offices shall be candidates for the respective offices.

**Section 5.** For the offices of president and vice president, only pastors active in the parish ministry shall be eligible.

## ARTICLE VII

### Rights and Duties of the Officers

**Section 1.** The president shall be responsible for the supervision of doctrine and practice within the district. The president shall represent the district, shall supervise the execution of its resolutions and shall sign all documents issuing from the district. The president shall provide for the ordination of such candidates for the ministry who shall have graduated from the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary or such who shall have otherwise qualified and who shall have received and accepted a call from within the confines of the district. He shall also authorize the installation of other pastors and of male teachers called by congregations within the district. He shall issue letters of transfer to such pastors and male teachers as shall enter another church body in fellowship with the synod. The president shall supervise the work of the district circuit pastors. With the concurrence of the other district officers, the president shall fill vacancies in the office of secretary and second vice president. He shall also fill vacancies on all boards and committees of the district. The president and vice presidents shall fill vacancies in the office of the circuit pastor. All appointments made are for the remainder of the unexpired term. With the concurrence of the two vice presidents, the president shall have the right to remove a synod member from the synodical membership. Unless an appeal is pending, he shall submit a complete report of his action to the district at its next convention. With the consent of the vice presidents, the president may call a special convention of the district or change the time and place of a convention. At each regular convention of the district the president shall submit a written report on the activities of his office during the past biennium.

**Section 2.** The vice presidents shall carry out such assignments the president may assign or are prescribed in this constitution. The first vice president shall take the place of the president whenever the latter shall be prevented from discharging his duties, and in the case of a vacancy in the office of the president, shall serve as president until the next convention. He shall also oversee special support provided for pastors and teachers and their widows and orphans who are in need of such assistance. In the case of a vacancy in the office of first vice president, the second vice president shall serve as first vice president until the next convention. Vice presidents shall not serve as circuit pastors. Offices vacated by election shall be filled by election at that convention for the remainder of the unexpired term.

**Section 3.** The secretary shall record the minutes of the convention and, with the concurrence of the president and according to the instructions of the district, prepare a report thereon for publication. The secretary shall sign all documents issuing from the district, shall keep a list of all congregations, pastors and male teachers who are members of the district, shall announce all district conventions in *Forward in Christ* not less than six weeks prior to their convening and with the consent of the president may appoint such assistants as may be necessary to perform his duties.

## ARTICLE VIII

### Conventions

**Section 1.** The district shall convene regularly once in each biennium.

**Section 2.** Every pastor, professor and male teacher of the district shall be required to attend full time unless he is excused. Each congregation of the district shall be represented by a lay delegate, who shall be certified to the secretary of the district by his congregation.

**Section 3.** The president of the district shall preside at the conventions of the district. Together with the vice presidents he shall appoint such committees as are necessary to expedite the work of the convention. All special committees, standing committees, boards, and commissions of the district shall present a written report to the district convention. All matters to come before the convention shall ordinarily be presented in writing to the president at least 30 days prior to the convention. The president and vice presidents shall approve exceptions. All expenses of the district convention, with the exception of essayists' expenses which may be paid by the synod, shall be paid by the membership of the district.

**Section 4.** All appointments made pursuant to the district constitution shall be ratified by the district convention.

#### **ARTICLE IX**

##### **Supervision of Doctrine and Practice**

**Section 1.** The district shall exercise supervision over its members in matters of doctrine and practice through circuit pastors elected by the circuits of the district for two-year terms with no limitation on the number of terms.

**Section 2.** In intracongregational matters the district shall have purely advisory authority and shall offer counsel and assistance in adjusting controversies, in filling vacancies and in such other matters as may involve the interest of the synod.

#### **ARTICLE X**

##### **Conferences and Circuits**

**Section 1.** The district shall determine the number and boundaries of its conferences and circuits. A circuit shall consist normally of not more than 8 congregations.

**Section 2.** Each circuit shall have a circuit pastor. The circuit pastor shall be elected by the delegate circuit meeting (or delegate conference) and shall serve a term of two years. Each pastor, each male teacher, and each congregation in the circuit (or conference) shall have one vote each in the election of the circuit pastor.

**Section 3.** Regular meetings of the circuits (or conferences) shall be held. At least once a biennium a circuit meeting or conference shall be held consisting of pastors, male teachers, and lay delegates of congregations. The delegates shall hear reports on and discuss the work of the synod.

#### **ARTICLE XI**

##### **Responsibilities of the Members of the District**

**Section 1.** Each congregation shall send a lay delegate to all regular and special conventions of the district and one or more delegates to all delegate conferences. In case no delegate is sent, the congregation shall submit a written excuse prior to the convention.

**Section 2.** Each congregation shall promote the work of the synod and contribute equitable support to its work.

**Section 3.** Each pastor and male teacher shall attend the conventions of the district and meetings of its conferences and circuits or show sufficient cause for his absence. When receiving or accepting a call elsewhere he shall notify the district president.

## **ARTICLE XII**

### **Vacancies in the Ministry**

In case of a vacancy in the pastorate, a congregation shall notify the president of the district so that he may assist the congregation in securing pastoral service during the vacancy. The president shall also counsel the congregation as it extends calls for filling its vacancy. Similar notice shall be given and counsel requested in case a congregation is calling a teacher for its school or a staff minister. The president may delegate someone to represent him in these matters. In the case of congregations subsidized by the synod, the district mission board shall be fully informed regarding the calling process and shall be invited to have a representative at the call meeting.

## **ARTICLE XIII**

### **District Council**

- Section 1.** The districts may have a district council. The council shall be composed of the president, the vice presidents, the secretary, synodical council lay member, the circuit pastors, the chairmen of the district boards, commissions and committees and coordinators.
- Section 2.** The council shall meet at least once a year to counsel together in matters pertaining to the welfare of the district. At the discretion of the president, it may meet more often.
- Section 3.** The council shall nominate a slate of candidates for election to the nominating committee of the district, composed of at least two nominees for each position. The slate of candidates shall be sent to the convention delegates at least 30 days prior to the convention.
- Section 4.** The council shall submit a written report of its activities to the regular district conventions.
- Section 5.** In districts with no district council, the nomination of a slate of candidates for election to the district nominating committee shall be done by the circuit pastors of the district in consultation with the district praesidium.

## **ARTICLE XIV**

### **Mission Districts and Mission Boards**

- Section 1.** The district shall be a mission district unless otherwise established.
- Section 2.** The district may recommend to the synod the establishment of more than one mission district within the district for better administration of missions within the district. The establishment of a mission district that includes portions of more than one district may also be recommended to the synod by the respective districts.
- Section 3.** There shall be a mission board to carry out home mission activities in each mission district. The direct supervision and administration of the missions and mission work within the mission district shall be vested in the mission board, subject to such rules and regulations as the Board for Home Missions may adopt.
- Section 4.** The board for each mission district shall be elected by the mission district and composed of as many pastors, teachers and laymen as the mission district may from time to time determine. The term of office shall be four years. The members may succeed themselves twice.

**Section 5.** The board shall present periodic reports to the Board for Home Missions and shall submit its ministry financial plan to the Board for Home Missions for approval.

**Section 6.** A pastor and lay member of the board shall be members of the Board for Home Missions.

#### **ARTICLE XV**

##### **Congregational Services**

**Section 1.** There shall be a district Congregational Services group to assist congregations in the following areas of ministry: evangelism, worship, Lutheran schools, discipleship, special ministries, and congregational counseling. The group shall consist of as many coordinators as the district deems appropriate to cover these areas of ministry. Coordinators shall be elected for a term of four years and may succeed themselves twice. The terms shall be staggered within the group.

**Section 2.** The coordinators shall provide a link with the synodical commissions. Each biennium the coordinators shall choose one from among their number to serve as the chairman of the group.

**Section 3.** Coordinators, in consultation with the district president, may organize standing committees, ad hoc committees, task forces, and ministry groups to serve in carrying out the work of the coordinator.

**Section 4.** The coordinators shall carry out on the district level, as feasible, the duties and responsibilities assigned to the synodical commissions.

#### **ARTICLE XVI**

##### **Ministry of Christian Giving**

**Section 1.** There shall be a commission entitled "Ministry of Christian Giving" consisting of no more than six pastors and laymen, each appointed by the district president for a term of four years. Commission members may succeed themselves twice. The chairman of the commission shall be appointed by the district president. The president shall be an advisory member of the commission.

**Section 2.** The commission shall augment and provide district flavor to the information and communication transmitted from the synod's leadership to congregations in the district. It shall solicit and monitor responses from the congregations to the commission.

**Section 3.** The commission shall carry out its responsibilities through the use of area communicators. Each communicator, preferably a layman, shall be appointed by the president in consultation with the commission and shall maintain regular contact with congregations, four to eight in number, in his contact area. The commission shall work with the president in identifying, training, and supporting the communicators. Communication with congregations shall be made with a contact man appointed or elected in each congregation. The commission shall be responsible for the training of congregational contact men.

**Section 4.** The commission shall regularly analyze synod subscriptions and financial performances of congregations in the district and shall promote equity among congregations in support of the synod's ministry financial plan. The commission shall make regular

reports and submit ministry financial plans for approval to the synod's Ministry of Christian Giving.

## **ARTICLE XVII**

### **Legislation Committee**

- Section 1.** The president and vice presidents may appoint a district legislation committee from each state or province in the district as the synod's interests may require or designate another standing district committee (e.g., the district constitution committee) as the district legislation committee.
- Section 2.** The committee shall take note of bills introduced into the state legislatures and provincial assemblies in their district which may affect the interests of the synod. In cases where the interests of the synod may be affected, the committee shall inform the district president and the synod president. The district president and the synod president shall take such action as they deem necessary.

## **ARTICLE XVIII**

### **Nominating Committee**

- Section 1.** There shall be a nominating committee composed of two members from each of its conferences. Members of the committee shall be elected by ballot by the district from a slate of candidates nominated by the district council. In districts with no district council, the slate of candidates shall be nominated by the circuit pastors of the district in consultation with the district praesidium. The slate of candidates shall first be ratified by the district in convention before proceeding to the election. The district in convention may add to the slate of candidates. A majority vote shall be necessary for election. The term of office shall be four years with one conference representative elected at each regular convention of the district. Members may succeed themselves twice.
- Section 2.** There shall be an additional member, elected by the district, for a four-year term who shall serve as chairman of the nominating committee. He may succeed himself twice. The chairman shall also represent the district on the synod's Nominating Committee.
- Section 3.** The committee shall nominate at least two candidates for each elective office of the district, except as otherwise provided for in this constitution. It shall nominate at least three names for offices of the synod elected by the district.
- Section 4.** The list of candidates nominated by the committee shall be sent to the delegates at least 30 days prior to the convention. The ballot submitted to the convention by the committee shall first be ratified by the district in convention before proceeding to the election. The district in convention may add to the slate of candidates.
- Section 5.** The committee shall supply the voting delegates with pertinent, factual information about the candidates. Pertinent information shall include congregational affiliation, age, occupation or profession and address.

## **ARTICLE XIX**

### **Committee on Constitutional Matters**

- Section 1.** There shall be a committee on constitutional matters composed of three members appointed by the president and vice presidents. The term of office shall be four years. The term of one member shall expire every two years. A member may succeed himself twice.



**Section 2.** The committee shall examine the constitution and bylaws of congregations applying for membership in the district and make its recommendation to the convention. In the years the district does not meet, it shall make its recommendations to the president, upon whose recommendation members are accepted at the convention of the synod. The committee shall also approve revisions of constitutions and bylaws of congregations of the district.

## **ARTICLE XX**

### **Duties of Circuit Pastors**

**Section 1.** A circuit pastor shall visit each pastor in his circuit at least once every four years for the purpose of strengthening the unity of the Spirit. He shall discuss the manner in which the goals and programs of the synod are being carried out and shall offer assistance in solving local problems. It shall also be the duty of the circuit pastor to visit congregations when invited by the pastor or the congregation, or when delegated by the district president. Since the circuit pastor is not elected by the district, he is not subject to the restrictions of Article XXVI of the district constitution.

**Section 2.** The circuit pastors of the district shall meet annually.

## **ARTICLE XXI**

### **Jurisdiction and Procedure in Disciplinary Actions and Removal from Office at the District Level**

**Section 1.** In cases of discipline among pastors, teachers, and congregations of both self-supporting and mission status, the district in which such pastors, teachers, and congregations hold membership and/or serve shall exercise original jurisdiction. The synod Board of Appeals shall exercise appellate jurisdiction.

**Section 2.** In cases of discipline among the faculties of the synodical schools or the area Lutheran high schools and administrators of synodical boards and commissions, the respective board or commission shall exercise original jurisdiction. The district in which the appellant is a member and/or serves and the Synod Board of Appeals shall exercise appellate jurisdiction successively.

**Section 3.** The two district vice presidents with the concurrence of the district circuit pastors may remove the district president from his office. The president shall have 30 days thereafter to appeal this removal. If the president appeals, the appeal will be heard by the District Board of Appeals. The Synod Board of Appeals shall exercise appellate jurisdiction.

**Section 4.** In the case of district vice presidents and secretary, the president with the concurrence of the circuit pastors may remove another officer. The district officer shall have 30 days thereafter to appeal this removal. If he appeals, the appeal will be heard by the District Board of Appeals. The Synod Board of Appeals shall exercise appellate jurisdiction.

**Section 5.** In the case of a congregation, ministry, or affiliated ministry operating within one district, it may become necessary for the district through its praesidium, after consultation with the Conference of Presidents, to remove the congregation, ministry, or affiliated ministry from membership in or affiliation with the synod for cause. The group shall have 30 days to appeal this removal. If the group appeals, the appeal shall be heard by the District Board of Appeals. The decision of the District Board of Appeals may be appealed to the Synod Board of Appeals.

- Section 6.** The conduct of review shall rest with the District Board of Appeals. The decision of the District Board of Appeals may be appealed to the Synod Board of Appeals. Upon appeal, the Synod Board of Appeals may review the action of the District Board of Appeals.
- Section 7.** In the case of removal from office of district board, commission or committee members, the board, commission, or committee may remove a member from his position. The member shall have 30 days to appeal the removal. If he appeals, the appeal will be heard by the District Board of Appeals. The decision of the District Board of Appeals may be appealed to the Synod Board of Appeals. Upon appeal, the Synod Board of Appeals may review the action of the District Board of Appeals.
- Section 8.** In cases of discipline among missionaries under the jurisdiction of the Board for World Missions, the respective administrative committee shall exercise original jurisdiction. The Board for World Missions, the District Board of Appeals and the Synod Board of Appeals shall exercise appellate jurisdiction successively.
- Section 9.** With the exception of appeals by laymen who are disciplined by their congregations, all appeals shall be submitted to the synod president who shall forward them to the appropriate Board of Appeals.
- Section 10.** In all cases of removal, the responsible entity shall provide written confirmation to the individual or group removed within seven days. Any removal requires the cessation of all duties and responsibilities while the appeal process, if any, is being carried out. The responsible entity shall report the removal to the synod via the call report and other appropriate means of communication.

## **ARTICLE XXII**

### **District Board of Appeals**

- Section 1.** The District Board of Appeals shall be composed of 10 members: a chairman, three pastors, three teachers, and three laymen. It shall be elected by the district in convention from a slate of candidates submitted by the district nominating committee. The chairman shall be a pastor. Their term shall be for four years and they may succeed themselves twice. Terms shall be staggered. Members of the District Board of Appeals may hold other elective or appointive offices.
- Section 2.** A five-person Board of Appeals panel shall be formed to decide each appeal. The chairman or his designee plus four board members selected by the chairman shall make up a Board of Appeals panel. Each panel must include at least one pastor, one teacher, and one lay member.
- Section 3.** The panel is to act independently as it considers the appeal. It has the right and responsibility to review all documentary evidence. It has the right to conduct interviews and to request additional information from anyone it deems to be connected to the matter. It has the responsibility to rule whether the disciplinary action was justified in its substance and whether the process followed was in keeping with biblical principles and with any applicable bylaws.
- Section 4.** The decision of a Board of Appeals panel shall be the final disposition of an appeal unless, when possible, an appeal is made to the Synod Board of Appeals. The decision of the District Board of Appeals shall be respected by all members of the Synod, even while an appeal may be made to the Synod Board of Appeals.

## **ARTICLE XXIII**

### **Rights of the Disciplined Party**

- Section 1.** Any person or congregation that has been disciplined under Article XXI shall be notified in writing by the district president of the right of appeal under Article XXII of the district constitution within 30 days of completion of the disciplinary action. A copy of these articles shall be included in the letter.
- Section 2.** The disciplined party shall have 30 days to appeal the action. To exercise the right of appeal the disciplined party shall file notice of appeal with the synod president within 30 days of the notification of the right of appeal. The synod president shall forward the appeal to the appropriate Board of Appeals.

## **ARTICLE XXIV**

### **Appeals by Laypersons**

- Section 1.** A layperson who has been subject to a disciplinary action by a congregation shall have the right to appeal the action. The layperson shall be notified in writing by the congregation of the right of appeal. Such notification shall occur within 30 days of the completion of the disciplinary action. Such appeal must be filed with the district president in writing, with a copy to the congregation, within 30 days of the disciplinary action.
- Section 2.** Upon receipt of the appellant's request, the district president shall notify the District Board of Appeals.
- Section 3.** The constitution for the districts affirms that "in intracongregational matters the district shall have purely advisory authority" (Article IX, Section 2). The review shall be conducted, therefore, to determine whether the process leading to the disciplinary action and the doctrinal basis of the disciplinary action were scriptural.
- Section 4.** The conduct of the review shall rest solely with the District Board of Appeals. The board shall have the right and power to examine all documentary evidence and to require such testimony that, in its judgment, is relevant.
- Section 5.** The district Board of Appeals shall submit its decision in writing to the appellant with a copy to the disciplining body, circuit pastor, and district president. The decision of the District Board of Appeals shall be the final disposition of the appeal.
- Section 6.** Within 30 days of the board's decision, the complete records of the board shall be filed with the district president, who shall act, if necessary, in accordance with his responsibility for the district's doctrine and practice.

## **ARTICLE XXV**

### **Appeals after Removal from Office**

- Section 1.** A pastor or teacher who has been removed from office because of "established inability to perform the duties of his/her office" (*Model Constitution and Bylaws for Congregations of the WELS, 1997, Article IX, Section 2*) shall have the right to have the action reviewed by the District and Synod Board of Appeals successively. The request for review must be filed in writing within 30 days of the removal from office. The request for review is to be addressed to the president of the synod who shall notify the appropriate Board of Appeals.

- Section 2.** The conduct of the review shall rest solely with the District Board of Appeals. It has the right and responsibility to review all documentary evidence. It has the right to conduct interviews and to request additional information from anyone it deems to be connected to the matter. It has the responsibility to rule whether the disciplinary action was justified in its substance and whether the process followed was in keeping with biblical principles and with any applicable bylaws.
- Section 3.** If the board rules in favor of the pastor or teacher who has been removed, the pastor or teacher shall be restored to the official list of pastors and teachers and declared “eligible for a call into the ministry.”
- Section 4.** If the board rules against the pastor or teacher who has been removed, the pastor or teacher shall have the right to appeal to the Synod Board of Appeals through the synod president within 30 days of notification of action by the District Board.
- Section 5.** Upon appeal of either party, the Synod Board of Appeals may review the action of the District Board of Appeals. The records of the district board’s proceedings shall be used as a basis for any review. It has the right and responsibility to review all documentary evidence. It has the right to conduct interviews and to request additional information from anyone it deems to be connected to the matter. It has the responsibility to rule whether the disciplinary action was justified in its substance and whether the process followed was in keeping with biblical principles and with any applicable bylaws.
- Section 6.** The decision of the Synod Board of Appeals shall be the final disposition of the case.

#### **ARTICLE XXVI**

##### **Restriction on Offices and Appointments Held**

No person shall hold more than one elective office of the district at the same time. In districts having more than 15,000 communicants, no person shall hold more than one elective and one appointive office of the district or two appointive offices of the district at the same time. Positions on the Nominating Committee, District Board of Appeals, and circuit pastors are not subject to the restrictions of this article.

#### **ARTICLE XXVII**

##### **Amendments**

Amendments to this constitution may be made at any convention of the synod by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the voting delegates, provided that notice of such amendments shall have been sent to all voting and advisory delegates at least 60 days prior to said convention or included in the Reports and Memorials to said convention.

#### **ARTICLE XXVIII**

##### **District Bylaws**

Bylaws to the district constitution may be adopted, amended, or repealed by the district in convention by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the votes cast without referral to the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. No bylaw shall conflict with the district constitution or with the constitution and bylaws of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod.