

December 27, 2020

Dear Congregation Member,

In late January 2020, when I presented proposed constitution changes at our congregation's annual meeting, I did not anticipate needing to come before you again in 2021 with more proposed constitution changes. However, the coronavirus pandemic, then unforeseen but now a reality, has affected every aspect of our lives, including the ways in which we conduct the business of the congregation. By making a few changes to our constitution, we can be in a better position—both now and in the future—to adapt to such challenging circumstances.

All but one of the proposed changes to the constitution pertain to electronic meetings or to remote participation in meetings held at a physical location. Earlier this year, the ELCA created a document that lists considerations for congregations as they seek to implement electronic member or council meetings. Using that document's advice, provisions already contained in the ELCA's *Model Constitution for Congregations*, and information from Minnesota statutes, I compiled and presented a list of proposed constitution changes to the council this fall. With the council's support, I will be presenting these proposed constitution changes, listed on the back of this letter, for your vote at our January 31, 2021 annual meeting.

The council passed a continuing resolution at its October 2020 meeting that allows electronic member meetings to be held until the congregation has a chance to vote on these proposed constitution changes. Our upcoming annual meeting is planned to be held via Zoom, with both internet and phone-only participation available. Please plan to attend.

If you have any questions about the proposed constitution changes, please feel free to contact me at (763) 753-3719 or email me at ekramm@comcast.net.

In Christ,
Ellen Kramm

Action	Provision	Text/Rationale
Add	Constitution provision C10.08.	<p><u>This congregation may hold meetings by remote communication, including electronically and by telephone conference, as long as there is an opportunity for simultaneous aural communication.</u></p> <p>Minnesota state law requires our bylaws to explicitly authorize the holding of member meetings solely by remote communication. The wording above is taken from the ELCA's <i>Model Constitution for Congregations</i>. (Majority vote to add)</p>
Add	Bylaw C10.08.01.	<p><u>When a Congregation Meeting is held in person at a designated place, a member not physically present may participate in that meeting by means of remote communication, as long as there is an opportunity for simultaneous aural communication.</u></p> <p>Minnesota state law requires our bylaws to explicitly authorize remote participation in member meetings that are held at a physical location. (2/3 vote to add)</p>
Delete	Bylaw C10.06.01.	<p>All elections held at a Congregation Meeting shall be by written ballot. If any position is uncontested, a written ballot is not required for that position.</p> <p>If constitution provision C10.08. (see above) is adopted, it would make sense to delete this bylaw. We added this bylaw in January 2018 to require written ballots for elections but allow that requirement to be waived for uncontested positions. Now, in a time in which we recognize the likelihood of having to hold congregation meetings solely or partially by remote communication, the requirement for written ballots for contested elections might become impractical. As this is the <u>only</u> place in our constitution that currently requires written ballots, we give ourselves the flexibility to adapt to changing circumstances by eliminating this requirement. (Note that eliminating the requirement for written ballots does not prevent their use, if desired.) (2/3 vote to delete)</p>
Modify	Constitution provision C12.13.	<p><u>The Congregation Council and its teams may hold meetings by remote communication, including electronically and by telephone conference and, to the extent permitted by state law, notice of all meetings may be provided electronically.</u> Notice of all meetings of the Congregation Council and its teams may be provided electronically, to the extent permitted by state law.</p> <p>Minnesota state law already allows non-profit boards and committees to hold meetings solely by remote communication, without requiring it to be stated in the organization's bylaws. However, it seems helpful to explicitly state it using this wording from the <i>Model Constitution</i>, so that no one has to research state statutes if the question comes up in the future. (Majority vote to modify)</p>
Add	Bylaw C12.13.01.	<p><u>When a Congregation Council or team meeting is held in person at a designated place, a council or team member not physically present may participate in that meeting by means of remote communication, as long as there is an opportunity for simultaneous aural communication.</u></p> <p>Minnesota state law already allows non-profit boards and committees to hold meetings at a physical location with some members participating by means of remote communication. However, it seems helpful to explicitly state it using wording that parallels similar wording for member meetings in proposed bylaw C10.08.01 above. (2/3 vote to add)</p>
Delete	Bylaw C13.12.02.	<p>All teams shall submit written reports to the Congregation Council after each team meeting.</p> <p>This is an obsolete rule, dating from 2002 (or earlier). Currently, the council liaisons to each team provide oral team reports to the council during the time in the council meeting agenda for team reports. The council secretary summarizes these reports in the council meeting minutes. (If a team does provide a written report, it can be simply attached to the council meeting minutes.) (2/3 vote to delete)</p>