
Friday, September 29, 2023

Special Congregational Meeting on Sunday, November 5 at 9:30 AM

Purpose: To Approve an Updated Constitution for Holy Cross Lutheran Church with ELCA Requirements

As announced at the January 2023 annual meeting, Holy Cross embarked on a process to update our current constitution dated year 2000 and bring it into compliance with the current ELCA model constitution for congregations. Steps were as follows:

- In February, a small team consisting of Terry Berger (past church secretary), Eric Christensen (past council president and staff support committee member), and Harold Sargent (current council member and past church leader) started making proposed changes to our current constitution.
- In March through June, proposed changes to chapters of the document were brought to church council meetings for discussion and approval.
- In late June, the full document was sent to the Metropolitan Chicago Synod of the ELCA for their review and comments. Those comments and required changes were received in July.
- At August's meeting, the church council discussed and approved the associated changes to the document. The council is now recommending approval of the document by the congregation.

What's Changed from the Current Constitution

The ELCA model constitution for congregations is updated every 2 to 3 years by the ELCA and has now been updated 10 times since our year 2000 constitution. There are still 20 chapters in the document, but many chapters in the 2022 model have required wording that assures consistency in processes across ELCA congregations. For instance, Chapter 15 on "Discipline of Members and Adjudication" outlines a required process meant to cover all the situations and contingencies that the broader church has encountered.

Particular changes of note in our proposed new constitution are:

- Conduct of congregation meetings via remote communication is spelled out in the new constitution (Chapter 10).
- Our two existing mission endowment funds and their purposes are spelled out in bylaws of the new constitution (Chapter 5).
- Size of a quorum for congregation meetings has been adjusted from 15% of confirmed members to 10% of confirmed members (Chapter 10).
- Roles of officers, in particular the treasurer, have been modified to better align with current practices and structure of our church staff (Chapter 11).
- The Finance Committee has been added to the list of congregation committees designated by the constitution (Chapter 13). Other designated committees are the Nominating Committee, Audit Committee, Staff Support Committee, and Call Committee. Duties of each are spelled out in the bylaws of Chapter 13.
- Timing of Audit Committee report has been moved to July 1 annually (Chapter 13).

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Required Next Steps in the Constitution Update Process

To put the updated constitution into effect, we need to follow the amendment process outlined in Chapter 17 of our current year 2000 constitution. In particular,

- We need to notify our members of the proposed new constitution with Council's recommendation to approve 30 days in advance of a meeting for approval (the purpose of this communication).
- We are calling a special meeting on Sunday, November 5 at 9:30 am seeking congregation "approval" of the document. That requires at least a simple majority of those present voting in favor.
- At the January 2024 annual meeting, we will seek congregation "ratification" of the document. That requires at least a two-thirds majority.
- The secretary of the congregation will then send the ratified document to the Metropolitan Chicago Synod (MCS) once again. It then becomes effective in April 2024 unless the synod notifies us of a conflict between our document and the constitution and bylaws of the ELCA or the MCS.

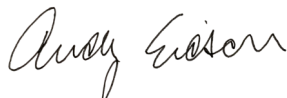
Your Opportunity to Participate Before November 5

In order to afford members the opportunity to review and comment on the document prior to November 5, the proposed updated constitution is now available on the church website at HolyCrossChurch.org/constitution or scan the QR code to the right.



The document consists of 20 chapters and over 30 pages. Additional information about the content of the document, including the sections that contain required wording from the ELCA, is available there. If you have questions or comments, you can submit them by email to Harold Sargent at hsargent2001@yahoo.com or you can attend one of the informational meetings hosted by church council members between worship services on Sundays, October 15, 22 and 29 in Room 208. Paper copies will be available at these informational meetings.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Andy Eidson".

Andy Eidson,
Church Council President

Rev. Christopher P. Neptun, Senior Pastor

A congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America