

## **NWOS Guidelines for Constitutional Updates and Approval**

1. Congregations updating their Constitution should form a taskforce of 3 to 5 people prepare updates to the Constitution. Before you begin, your taskforce should carefully review the following documents available through the **NWOS website**:
  - a. Introduction to Congregational Model Constitution
  - b. Use of the Model Constitution for Congregations 2013
  - c. ELCA Model Constitution for Congregations 2019
  - d. Your own congregation's constitution
2. After reviewing the documents, the committee should inform the NWOS Synod Administrator that they have begun the review process (email [jacob.henry@nwos-elca.org](mailto:jacob.henry@nwos-elca.org)). The Administrator will then answer any preliminary questions and can provide the committee with current trends in congregational constitutions, in addition to discussing the process timeline, and important deadlines.
3. Your committee can then begin to draft changes to the constitution. Changes should **not conflict** with the ELCA Model Constitution for Congregations and required provisions must be included. Please contact the Administrator at any time with questions. Your taskforce can certainly consult your congregational council and members to receive feedback as you prepare updates.
4. When your committee has finished drafting changes and updates, they should be submitted to the Administrator for review. Please submit **via email** your updated constitution. You do NOT need to submit or otherwise note the new changes. The Administrator will review to ensure there are no conflicts with the Model Constitution and will also provide general feedback and suggestions. Please allow **4 – 6 weeks** for review.
5. Once the review is complete, the Administrator will contact your committee with approval or recommend changes. Once everything has been approved, your committee may present the updates and changes to your congregational council for debate and approval. Once approved by the Church Council, final ratification of the updated constitution must take place by the congregation at a Congregational Meeting.
6. Once your Congregation has ratified the changes, notify the Synod Administrator, who will present the updated Constitution to the Synod Council for final approval. Synod Council only meets **quarterly**, so careful planning and coordination with your Synod Administrator is of utmost importance for you to have an accurate timeline for ratification by your Congregation and approval by Synod Council.