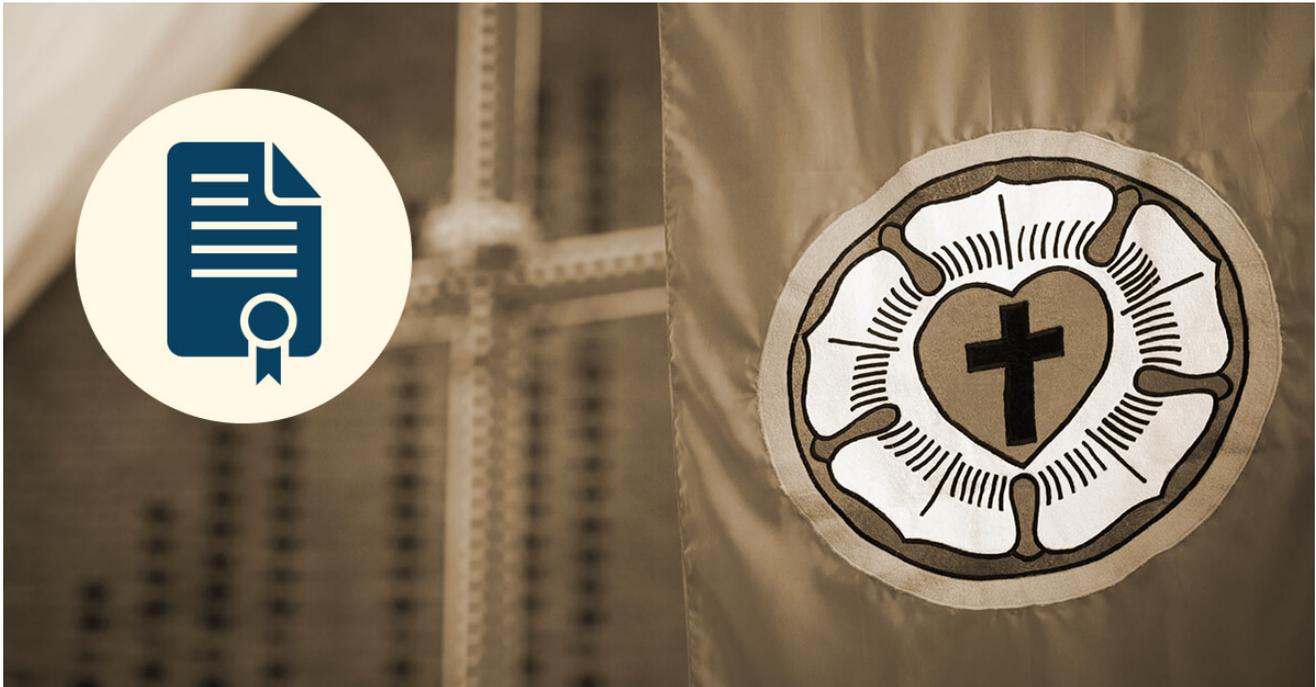


# Official notice: Office of the Secretary, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

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Reporter Staff

September 16,  
2019



The 2019 convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (in Session 4, by a vote of Yes: 873; No: 77, more than the required two-thirds majority) adopted Res. 9-05, “To Amend the Constitution to Address Individual Membership and Advisory Representation,” a resolution that will — if ratified — amend the Synod Constitution. By a separate mailing, including an official ballot, the resolution has been submitted to the congregations of the Synod for ratification under the procedure of Article XV. **After taking official action on this matter, congregations must use the official ballot to cast their affirmative or negative votes on each amendment, returning it to the Secretary of the Synod. The amendment must receive a favorable two-thirds majority of all votes cast by congregations within six months of the date of the mailing of the ballots. The deadline for this ballot to be received in the office of the Secretary of the Synod will be March 16, 2020.**

The amendment before the congregations of the Synod acts in a concerted manner on Articles V, VI, IX, XII, and XIII to address accumulated unclarities and contradictions resulting from piecemeal amendment of the Constitution over many years, while maintaining the essential substance of the Constitution. The amendment, proposed by Synod’s Commissions on Handbook and Constitutional Matters, has five effects: (1) it clarifies who is

an advisory delegate at the district convention; (2) it restores the ability of a congregation that is part of a multi-congregation parish, but not sending the parish's voting delegate, to send an advisory lay delegate to the district convention; (3) it straightens out a long-standing confusion of *individual membership* with *advisory representation*, a confusion that has cost a few congregations their pastoral representation; (4) it uses consistent language of ordained and commissioned ministers throughout the Constitution and shifts the list of the various types of commissioned minister, relatively frequently amended, to the Bylaws; and (5) it adopts the proposal of Concordia University Wisconsin/Ann Arbor to retitle *certified lay ministers* as *directors of church ministries*, consistent with other commissioned offices.

Structurally, the constitutional change will make Article V, which presently deals with both membership and convention representation, deal with membership *only*, with details of representation left to Articles IX and XII 10. It will also have the Constitution treat the broadest categories of individual membership more clearly and in a manner more explicitly reflecting Walther's *Church and Ministry*, leaving often-amended details to the Bylaws. It is intended by the Commission on Handbook to have the same sense as (but greater clarity than) existing constitutional language, except where the noted problems are addressed.

**Full detail on the attached amendment, including concomitant changes to Bylaws 2.6, 2.11.2, 3.1.2.1, 3.1.3, and 4.2.3, may be obtained in Res. 9-05 of the 2019 Convention Proceedings. Questions or concerns may be addressed to my office at [lcmssecretary@lcms.org](mailto:lcmssecretary@lcms.org) or 314-996-1417.**

John W. Sias, *Secretary*

#### PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

##### Article V Membership

Membership in the Synod is held and may be acquired by congregations and individuals, ministers of religion—ordained and ministers of religion—commissioned, such as teachers, directors of Christian education, directors of Christian outreach, directors of family life ministry, directors of parish music, deaconesses, parish assistants, and certified lay ministers of the Evangelical Lutheran Church who confess and accept the confessional basis of Article II.

##### 1. Voting Members

All organized congregations that have joined the Synod hold voting membership. At the meetings of the districts of the Synod every congregation or parish is entitled to two votes, one of which is to be cast by the pastor and the other by the lay delegate. At the meetings of the Synod a number of congregations shall form a group which shall be represented by two voting delegates, one a pastor and one a lay delegate.

## 1. Advisory Individual Members

Advisory Individual members only of the Synod, who are non-voting except for those pastors exercising the vote of a member congregation or congregations, are the following:

1. Pastors, ordained ministers, called and installed to a member congregation
2. 12. Pastors, ordained ministers, whose congregations do not hold membership in the Synod
3. 23. Ministers Ordained ministers, not in charge of called and installed to a congregations, serving in a capacity recognized in the Bylaws of the Synod
4. Professors at the Synod's educational institutions
5. Teachers of the Evangelical Lutheran Church Commissioned ministers equipped for service in an auxiliary office of ministry designated in, and serving in a capacity recognized by, the Bylaws of the Synod
6. Directors of Christian education
7. Directors of Christian outreach
8. Directors of family life ministry
9. Directors of parish music
10. Deaconesses
11. Parish assistants
12. Certified lay ministers
13. 125. Candidates for the office of the ministry, ordained ministers, or for an auxiliary office, commissioned ministers, for that of a teacher of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, for director of Christian education, for director of Christian outreach, for director of family life ministry, for director of parish music, for deaconess, for certified lay minister, or for parish assistant having formerly been installed to a first call within the Synod.
14. Emeriti of the office of the ministry, ordained ministers, or of an auxiliary office, commissioned ministers.

## Article VI Conditions of Membership

Conditions for acquiring and holding membership in the Synod are the following:

...

3. Regular call of pastors, teachers, directors of Christian education, directors of Christian outreach, directors of family life ministry, directors of parish music, deaconesses, certified lay ministers, and parish assistants and any commissioned ministers and regular election of lay delegates by the congregations, as also the blamelessness of the life of such.

...

6. Pastors, teachers, directors of Christian education, directors of Christian outreach, directors of family life ministry, directors of parish music, deaconesses, certified lay ministers, Ordained and commissioned ministers or candidates for these offices not coming from recognized orthodox church bodies must submit to a colloquium before being received.

...

#### Article IX Representation

The synodical meetings are composed of regularly elected and delegated representatives and of certain individual persons, as specified in the Bylaws, to wit:

1. Representatives of congregations, entitled to vote. A number of congregations shall form a group which shall be represented by two voting delegates, one a pastor and one a lay delegate.
2. Advisory representatives of the advisory members of the Synod such individual members as are ineligible to represent congregations as voting delegates and ineligible to represent other entities or offices in the Synod as advisory representatives.
3. Advisory representatives of boards, commissions, and educational institutions and such as by virtue of their office are required to attend the Synod.

#### Article XII Districts of the Synod and Their Regulation

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9. Furthermore, the district presidents shall

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1. Perform, either in person or by proxy, the ecclesiastical ordination of the candidates for the ministry assigned to their districts and the installation of such, as well as the installation commissioning of the candidates for the auxiliary offices of schoolteacher assigned to their districts, and the installation of all ministers and teachers, ordained or commissioned, called by the congregations in to serve within their districts;

...

10. The meetings of the districts of the Synod are composed of the following:
11. Voting Representatives Delegates

The pastors of such congregations as hold voting membership in the Synod and the lay delegates elected and deputed by these congregations shall be voting representatives. Every member congregation or multi-congregation parish is entitled to two votes, one of which is

to be cast by its pastor and the other by the lay delegate elected and deputed by the congregation or parish.

1. Advisory Members Delegates

Advisory members delegates are:

1. Pastors whose congregations do not hold membership in the Synod
2. Ministers not in charge of congregations
3. Professors at the Synod's educational institutions
4. Teachers of the Evangelical Lutheran Church
5. Directors of Christian education
6. Directors of Christian outreach
7. Directors of family life ministry
8. Directors of parish music
9. Deaconesses
10. Parish assistants
11. Certified lay ministers
12. Candidates for the office of the ministry, for that of a teacher of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, for director of Christian education, for director of Christian outreach, for director of family life ministry, for director of parish music, for deaconess, for certified lay minister, or for parish assistant.

all commissioned ministers, and those ordained ministers not presently serving as voting representatives of congregations, who are members of the Synod within the district. In addition, a congregation that is part of a multi-congregation parish, other than the congregation supplying the voting lay delegate, may elect and depute an advisory lay delegate.

...

Article XIII Expulsion from the Synod

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3. If the member expelled is a pastor or teacher in an ordained or commissioned minister serving a congregation of the Synod, such congregation, unless it has already done so, is held to depose him from office and to deal with him in accordance with the Word of God, notwithstanding an appeal. If it persistently refuses to do so, the respective district is to deal with it. If all negotiations and admonitions fail of their purpose, such congregation forfeits its membership in the Synod.

*Posted Sept. 16, 2019*

