



**MODEL CONSTITUTION
FOR
CONGREGATIONAL OR INTERCONGREGATIONAL UNITS
OF THE
WOMEN OF THE
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA®**

Current as of July 2026

Approved Model Constitution and Bylaws Congregational or Intercongregational Unit

NOTE

Intercongregational Unit is when two or more churches join to form one Women of the ELCA unit.

Provisions marked with an asterisk (*) are required provisions.

The provisions of the Constitution and Bylaws that pertain to the same subject have been placed together. The two types of provisions are identified in the following way:

Constitutional provisions are printed in **bold** type.

Bylaws are printed in regular type.

ARTICLE I—MEMBERSHIP AND NAME

***SECTION 1. Name**

The name of this [congregational] [intercongregational] [synod-authorized worshipping community] unit shall be [enter name], Women of the ELCA, hereinafter designated as “the unit.”

ARTICLE II—STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

***SECTION 1. Purpose**

As a community of women created in the image of God, called to discipleship in Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves to grow in faith, affirm our gifts, support one another in our callings, engage in ministry and action, and promote healing and wholeness in the church, the society, and the world.

***SECTION 2. Commitment**

To accomplish the purpose of Women of the ELCA, women in this unit shall commit themselves to

- a. come together for study, support, and action;**
- b. strive participate in the ministry of Women of the ELCA beyond the congregation;**
- c. submit offerings/gifts to support the total program of Women of the ELCA; and**
- d. designate a person/point of contact that shall be in communication with the synodical and churchwide women’s organization.**

ARTICLE III—PARTICIPATION

***SECTION 1. Participation**

Participation is open to all who identify as women in the congregation/synod-authorized worshipping community. Participation may be in small groups and/or as individuals within this organization.

***SECTION 2. Eligible to Vote**

Those who identify as women who are voting members of the congregation of [church's name] [confirmed members of all synod-authorized worshipping community] shall be eligible to vote, to hold an office, or to be voting members to conventions.

***SECTION 3. Events and Opportunities**

The members of Women of [church's name] have the option to participate in events and other opportunities offered by Women of the ELCA (WELCA) and the [synod name] Synodical WELCA.

ARTICLE IV—RELATIONSHIPS

SECTION 1. Congregation

This unit should participate in the life and work of [name(s) of congregation(s)] and report to the annual meeting(s). It may report regularly to the congregational council(s).

SECTION 2. Cluster or Conference

This unit should strive to participate in activities within the cluster or conference to which it is assigned, if possible.

SECTION 3. Synodical Women's Organization

In an interdependent partnership with the [name of synod] Synodical Women's Organization, this unit should participate in the convention of the [name of synod] Synodical Women's Organization by

- Item 1. Electing or appointing a voting member and an alternate to represent the unit; and
- Item 2. Cooperating in the process for nomination of officers and board members of the synodical women's organization.

SECTION 4. Churchwide Women's Organization

- Item 1. This unit should strive to participate in the process for nomination of voting members to the Triennial Convention.
- Item 2. This unit should strive to participate in the process of nomination of officers and board members.

ARTICLE V—MEETINGS

SECTION 1. Program

Women of this unit should strive to come together regularly [designate dates, times, etc.] for study, support, and action.

SECTION 2. Business

There should be a business meeting(s)[†] held in [name of month(s)] for purposes such as receiving reports, projecting plans, electing/assigning leadership, and adopting an annual budget.

[†] At least annually

ARTICLE VI—LEADERSHIP

SECTION 1. Leaders

This unit shall have [names of leadership/coordinator positions], elected for a term of one year and eligible for reelection.

SECTION 2. Duties of Leaders

[fill in appropriately]

SECTION 3. Duties of Unit (Board) (Coordinating Committee) (Coordinating Council)

[fill in appropriately]

ARTICLE VII—PLANNING

SECTION 1. Program Areas and Goals

This unit shall engage in planning, giving attention to the program areas and goals established by Women of the ELCA.

SECTION 2. Program Planning

The unit (board) (coordinating committee) (coordinating council) shall be responsible for the total program planning for the unit.

ARTICLE VIII—NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

SECTION 1. Nominating Committee

The unit should strive to have a nominating committee to present nominees for [names of leadership positions] for election/appointment by this unit.

SECTION 2. Elections

All elections/appointments shall be for a term of one year and eligible for reelection/reappointment.

ARTICLE IX—FINANCE

SECTION 1. Fiscal Year

The fiscal year and the budget year for this unit shall be determined by this unit.

SECTION 2. Administration

This unit shall develop and administer its own financial plan or budget that shall reflect support for the total program of Women of the ELCA.

SECTION 3. Transmittal

This unit shall transmit funds regularly in accordance with established procedures.

SECTION 4. Reports

This unit shall provide annual financial reports to participants.

SECTION 5. Financial accountability

An annual accounting compilation or review of this unit's financial records shall be conducted by a financial review committee of the unit.

ARTICLE X – DISSOLUTION CLAUSE

In the event of the dissolution of this congregational/intercongregational unit, any surplus assets remaining after the payment of its debts shall be disposed of by transfer to the synodical women's organization or to the churchwide women's organization or its successor provided that said organization is, at the time of dissolution, a qualified organization as described in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Service Code of 1986 or comparable provision, and, if not, to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or its successor, and, if not, to one or more organizations so qualified in such proportions as the leadership of this unit shall determine.

ARTICLE XI—BYLAWS AND AMENDMENTS

SECTION 1. Bylaws

This unit may adopt bylaws not in conflict with this constitution by a majority vote, provided they have been presented in writing at the previous meeting.

SECTION 2. Amendments

- Item 1. This constitution may be amended at any regular business meeting or special meetings of this unit by a two-thirds vote of the women present and voting and is consistent with the purpose of Women of the ELCA.
- Item 2. Amendments to the bylaws may be adopted by the unit by a majority vote.
- Item 3. Whenever the secretary of Women of the ELCA officially informs the congregational/intercongregational units that the Women of the ELCA Triennial Convention has amended the approved Model Constitution and Bylaws for Congregational/Intercongregational units, whether by setting out alternate clauses or otherwise, such provisions shall be introduced at once into this constitution and notice of this action shall be forwarded to the synodical president.