



Guidelines for Submitting New or Revised Constitution and Bylaws

When you plan to create or revise/amend either or both of your congregation's constitution and bylaws, please inform the Office of the President, Southeastern District before you begin. The Administrative Assistant to the President will insure that you receive the latest version of the SED, LCMS Guidelines for Constitutions and Bylaws. The completion of the process below is required by The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod for your congregation to establish (in the case of a new congregation) or retain (in the case of an existing congregation) its membership in good standing in the Synod.

The following is collective and time-saving advice from members of the Southeastern District Task Force for Constitution Review:

1. Please study the guidelines before working on your documents.
2. Be brief and concise. If greater detail seems needed, use a separate policy manual which can be updated more easily.
3. Do not include in your constitution or bylaws statements of belief, such as, the sanctity of marriage. Such statements are valued, but the Synod believes singling out one doctrinal understanding in the constitution or bylaws tends to diminish other doctrinal positions of the Synod. The Southeastern District and LCMS suggest creating a separate file or book containing the congregation's declarations of religious beliefs on this and other matters where our Lutheran religious beliefs come in conflict with the cultural mores and practices of the world around us.
4. Reflect love and concern for all by avoiding legalistic, restrictive and sexist language. Stay positive.
5. Carefully proofread the final copy of your proposed documents before submitting them to the District Office.

When your congregation has approved the new, revised or amended documents, and you are ready to submit them, ***please email your document in MS Word format*** to the Administrative Assistant to the President. In the case of revised or amended documents, ***please highlight the changes using the MS Word "Track Changes" feature***. You may also include a cover letter outlining the rationale for the portions that were changed.

Once she has received them, the Administrative Assistant will acknowledge their receipt and will forward copies to the Task Force so they can begin work.

The Task Force currently works on a first-in/first-out basis. After they have had a chance to review your documents, they may be in touch with you directly to discuss helpful suggestions, requests for additional information, or other guidance.

If the documents are returned to you with suggestions and/or required revisions, you will need to make the required corrections/changes, give due consideration to the suggestions, have your congregation approve any changes you make, and then resubmit the updated documents to the Administrative Assistant to the President, who will again forward them to the Task Force for final review.

Once the Task Force has recommended approval, your documents will be forwarded to the Southeastern District Board of Directors for their approval. You will then be notified of the Board of Director's action. Final coordination with the Administrative Assistant may be required to ensure that a clean copy of the approved document has been made available for filing at the SED.

The current Administrative Assistant to the President is:

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800-637-5723, ext. 202

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