

Chapter 12.  
CONFERENCES, CLUSTERS AND COALITIONS

\*S12.01. This synod shall establish conferences, clusters or coalitions within its territory as specified in the bylaws. The purpose of such groupings shall be to foster interdependent relationships among congregations, institutions, and synodical and churchwide units for mission purposes.

SB12.01.01. The Synod shall establish conferences within its territory. Conference division shall take into account political and geographical factors. They shall be approximately equal in number of congregations and baptized members and be easily grouped into five approximately equal electoral districts. A congregation may petition the Synod Council to change the conference to which it is assigned; such a change takes effect immediately after approval by the Synod Council and shall be reported to the next Synod Assembly. The Synod Council shall maintain a current roster of conference alignments.

SB12.01.02. The purpose of the Conferences shall be:

- a. to deliver and support synodical and churchwide programs;
- b. to develop mutually supportive clergy and congregational relationships;
- x c. to develop strategy for common mission;
- d. to be a means to provide pastoral care for clergy and congregations;
- e. to be a means for expressing needs and opinions of congregations and clergy to the Synod; and
- f. to nominate persons within each Conference for synodical positions elected by the Assembly from the electoral districts, as specified in the bylaws.

SB12.01.03. Each conference shall hold an assembly at least annually, composed of such representation of the congregations as the conference shall determine. The annual assembly for each year shall be held at least 60 days prior to the meeting of that year's Synod Assembly. In instances where two or more conferences deem it useful, they may convene in a joint assembly, provided that any business (such as nominations or elections) requiring action by the conferences individually be handled separately by each conference's delegates.

SB12.01.04. Each Conference shall elect its own officers, which shall include a Dean. The Dean shall be an ordained minister who

is a member of one of the congregations of the Conference. The dean shall serve a term of two years, and may serve no more than two consecutive terms. The dean's responsibilities shall be to represent the conference on the Council of Deans; to assist the bishop in providing pastoral care to congregations and clergy of the conference; and to fulfill such other responsibilities as the bishop or Synod Assembly may assign. The dean may preside at meetings of the Conference Assembly and Cabinet.

SB12.01.05. In the event that the office of the dean should become vacant, the Conference Cabinet shall appoint an interim dean; the next session of the Conference Assembly shall elect a new dean, who shall, upon taking office, serve a full two-year term.

SB12.01.06. There shall be a cabinet in each conference, consisting of the officers and other persons as the conference shall determine. The cabinet shall be responsible for planning the Conference Assembly and for fulfilling the purposes of the conference as listed in SB12.01.02.

### Chapter 13. CONGREGATIONS

- \*S13.01. Each congregation, except those certified as congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America by the uniting churches, prior to being listed in the register of congregations of this synod, shall adopt the Model Constitution for Congregations or one acceptable to this synod, which is not in contradiction to the constitution and bylaws of ELCA.
- \*S13.02. It shall be the responsibility of each congregation of this synod annually to choose from among its voting members laypersons to serve as members of the Synod Assembly as well as persons to represent it at meetings of any conference, cluster, or coalition of which it is a member. The number of persons to be elected by each congregation and other qualifications shall be as prescribed in guidelines established by this synod.
- S13.11. When a pastor or an associate in ministry resigns, the Congregation Council shall receive the letter of resignation, report it to the congregation, and at once notify the bishop of the synod.
- S13.12. A congregation under financial obligation to its former pastor or associate in ministry shall make satisfactory settlement of the obligation before calling a successor.
- S13.21. The alignment of congregations in pastoral charges, and all alterations in any alignment, shall be subject to approval

choose its own chair and meet at least twice a year; it shall meet additionally at the call of the bishop. The Committee shall:

- a. provide support and counsel to the bishop.
- b. annually review and evaluate the ministry of the bishop, and share with the bishop a summary of their evaluation. This evaluation shall remain confidential.
- c. elect one of its members to serve on the Personnel Committee.

S11.01.08. A Council of Deans, including the dean from each conference of the synod, shall serve as an advisory resource for the bishop. The deans are available to the bishop, at the bishop's request, for advice and counsel regarding such concerns as clergy awaiting call, congregations without pastor, congregations in the call process, and the general pastoral care of clergy and congregation.

S11.02. The committees and other organizational units of this synod shall be formed under the guidance of S6.04.

S11.03. A Division is a unit of the synod organization to which is assigned responsibility for an identified portion of the program of this synod.

S11.04. Each Division shall be directed by a steering committee composed of a chairperson, one person from each of the five electoral districts, and two Council members, all appointed by the Synod Council to staggered three-year terms. Each division will include the work of a number of committees, and committee chairpersons may meet with the division steering committee when invited by the steering committee.

*1 - Chair  
1 - 5 electoral districts  
2 - Council*

SB11.04.01. Each division steering committee shall meet at least two times each year.

SB11.04.02. Each division steering committee shall be responsible to the Synod Assembly and shall report to the Synod Council in the interim.

SB11.04.03. The synod shall have the following divisions:

- a. Division for Congregational Life
- b. Division for Ministry
- c. Division for Outreach

SB11.04.04. Division for Congregational Life