

Secretary's Report
Gulf Coast Synod
Caleb Parks, Interim Secretary
Paul Antolik, Outgoing Secretary

This year Paul Antolik agreed to serve as Treasurer (pending the outcome of the election at this assembly) after several years serving as Synod Secretary. I, Caleb Parks, an at large member of the Synod Council agreed to serve as Synod Secretary, pending the outcome of the election at this assembly.

The Synod Constitution provisions for Secretary are as follows:

S8.30. Secretary

†S8.31. *The secretary shall be elected by the Synod Assembly. The secretary shall be a voting member of a congregation of this synod. The secretary may be either a layperson or a rostered minister.*

†S8.32. *The secretary shall:*

- a. Keep the minutes of all meetings of the Synod Assembly and Synod Council, be responsible for distribution of such minutes, and perform such other duties as this synod may from time to time direct.*
- b. Be authorized and empowered, in the name of this synod, to attest all instruments which require the same, and which are signed and sealed by the bishop.*
- c. In consultation with the bishop, classify and arrange all important papers and documents and deposit them in the archives of this synod.*
- d. Submit to the secretary of this church at least nine months before each regular Churchwide Assembly a certified list of the voting members elected by the Synod Assembly.*

Additionally, the constitution states that the Secretary is elected to a four-year term, available for reelection without term limits:

†S8.51. *The terms of office of the officers of this synod shall be as follows:*

- a. The bishop of this synod shall be elected to a term of six years and may be re-elected.*
- b. The vice president and secretary of this synod shall be elected to a term of four years and may be re-elected. The officer shall serve until a successor takes office.*
- c. The treasurer of this synod shall be appointed to a term of four years and may be re-elected or reappointed. The treasurer shall serve until a successor takes office.*

The Secretary also reviews changes in congregation constitutions, according to a required provision in the Model Constitution for Congregations. The model can be found here: *them*.

https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Model_Constitution_for_Congregations_08_2022.docx

**C16.03. Any amendments to this constitution that result from the processes provided in *C16.01. and *C16.02. shall be sent by the secretary of this congregation to the synod. The synod shall notify this congregation of its decision to approve or disapprove the proposed changes; the changes shall go into effect upon notification that the synod has approved them.*

Every three years the ELCA holds a Churchwide Assembly. The last Churchwide Assembly was in 2022. The next one is 2025. Every three years there are several edits and updates to the ELCA Constitution and the model constitutions for congregations and synods. It is wise for congregations to update their constitutions every three years to bring them up to date with required provisions in the model constitution, and to make decisions about the optional provisions.

Required provisions are indicated with an asterisk in the model constitution for congregations, and with a dagger in the model constitution for synods. Changes without an asterisk or dagger are optional.

A summary of changes is copied below. The draft constitution can be found here:

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/9fd3rxeuifh3ldufz0hhd/Draft-Gulf-Coast-Synod-Constitution-2023-Corrected-20240209.docx?rlkey=6p67obeyu6ndy5sp4jn5d90w9&dl=0>.

Changes from 2019 to 2022 Model Constitution for Synods

Major changes from the 2019 prior model constitution:

1. †S1.21 – Does the Synod has a seal, but there is no use for it these days with electronic documents. Seals are being phased out. This will likely be removed at the 2025 Churchwide Assembly.
2. †S6.03.01.a – Removed item “5)” and moved “consulting in the call process for rostered ministers” up to point “3)”.
3. †S6.03.01.a.1 – Replaced “the ministry of Word and Sacrament” with “rostered ministry”.
4. †S6.03.01.a.2 – Added “rostered” before “ministers.”
5. †S6.04 – Changed gender percentages from 50 each to “at least 45” each
6. †S6.04 – Added “, as nearly as possible,” both places before “at least 45”
7. †S6.04.01 – Prior synod constitution seemed to be an inadvertent duplicate of the last sentence of †S6.04. So deleted it and replaced it with the current text of †S6.04.01
8. †S6.04.02 – Removed this provision number since there is no longer a provision here.
9. S7.14 – changed one-half to one-third as recommended (not required) in model
10. †S7.21.a – Struck “in attendance at the Synod Assembly” which, if we allow electronic participation could mess up the lay/clergy percentage. Oh, well, no choice - required

11. †S7.21.b – This was removed as it essentially replaced by the new words of S7.21.a. Items below were renumbered after removing 21.b
12. †S7.21.c – Added “, as nearly as possible,” before the first “at least 45” in the paragraph.
13. †S7.21.02 – new required section dealing with voting at special Synod Assemblies
14. Our old S7.21.02 – renumbered to S7.21.03 (non-required). Deals with Lay Voting Members calculations
15. S8.11.01 – new section, deals with compensating Bishop working with other expressions
16. †S8.16.01.a – Enter the changes to this point (see attached document).
17. †S8.16.01.b – Add “s” to the end of “provision” in the second line to form “provisions”.
18. S8.23 – delete this section as it is better covered by †S8.54
19. †S8.32.a – Changed to match model constitution
20. †S8.51.b – Replace “his or her” with “a”.
21. †S8.51.c – Replace “four-year term” with “term of four years”.
22. †S8.52 – This provision needs to have a dagger in front of it as it is now required. Replaced “ ___ month” to with “third month”
23. †S8.57.e.2 – Changed to match model constitution
24. S10.01.A92 and S10.01.01 appear to be duplicates. Deleted S10.01.A92
25. S10.01.06 – “Intentionally left blank”. Deleted it & renumbered S10.01.07 to S10.01.06
26. S10.07.02 – the current wording says Synod Council “shall meet three times a year”, I changed it to “shall meet at least three times a year” since we are meeting more than three times a year without consultation of the executive officers.
27. †S11.11 - is now required, but the wording exactly matched the prior non-required wording.
28. †S13.02. – Replaced “choose” with “elect” in the second line to match the model constitution
29. †S14.18.a – Added “any of” after “for” to match the model constitution.
30. †S14.18.b – Changed wording to match the model constitution.
31. †S14.18.b.1 – Changed wording to match the model constitution.
32. †S14.18.c – Changed wording to match the model constitution.
33. †S14.21 – Changed wording to match the model constitution.
34. †S14.23 – Replaced “parochial” with “congregation” in the seventh line to match the model
35. †S14.43.a - Added “the deacon’s” before “death” to match the model constitution.
36. †S14.43.a. – Added “any of” after “for” to match the model constitution.
37. †S14.43.b.1 – Changed wording to match the model constitution.
38. †S14.43.c – Changed wording to match the model constitution.
39. †S15.11 – Replaced the comma between “church” and “thus” in the sixth line with a semicolon to match the model constitution
40. †S16.01 – Removed “section” before “†S16.02.” in the last line to match the model
41. †S16.03 – Removed “section” before “†S16.01.” and before “†S16.02.” to match the model
42. †S17.03 – This was completely reworded, but the meaning is pretty much unchanged.
43. †S18.31 – Added “the” before “Synod Council” to match the model constitution

The following are very minor changes,

1. All pages – the font was changed from New Time Roman to Calibri
2. All pages – male changed to men and female changed to women
3. All pages – changed “Synodical” to “Synod”

4. All pages – physical disability is now just disability
5. All pages – mental incapacity is now just incapacity
6. †S7.11.01 – Do we want to keep it at six months?
7. †S7.21.01 – is now S7.21.01 (no longer required)
8. S7.23 – is now †S7.23 (it is required)
9. S7.24 – left it alone as the new wording is about the same as what we now have
10. S7.26 – changed to new wording as it seems clearer than our old wording.
11. S10.07.01 – deleted as S10.08.01 in the model has the same text, & renumbered S10.07.02 & S10.07.03.
12. S11.04.01 – the first sentence seems to be duplicative of †S11.04, so I removed it.
13. †S13.19 – is now †S13.20, no wording changes
14. †S13.20 – is now †S13.21, no wording changes
15. †S13.24 – is now required and has significantly different wording than the prior, non-required version, but about the same meaning

Changes to required provisions require no action by the Synod Assembly. Optional changes require a 2/3 vote of the Synod Assembly.

The Synod Council moves these changes, so they require no second.

Respectfully submitted,

Caleb Parks