

# EXPLANATION OF CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

## 2020 RATIFICATION OF CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

### **Apportionment of Additional Lay Delegates**

Article 7.02 specifies 750 baptized members as the baseline number for apportionment of lay delegates to each convocation. Congregations automatically receive one lay delegate per 750 baptized members. As needed, the Executive Council then apportions additional lay delegates from congregations to achieve an equal balance of lay and clergy delegates. The number was based on the number and size of congregations expected to be in the North American Lutheran Church (NALC) in the first couple years after its formation.

The number of NALC congregations has grown with a very different mix of sizes. The number of NALC pastors has also grown at a greater rate than congregations. With those changes, the number 750 no longer works. In recent years, the Executive Council has apportioned additional delegates using a much lower number of baptized members. Rather than set a specific number in the constitution, the amendment would allow for the Executive Council to use a number based on the current congregational and clergy membership of the NALC leading up to a convocation.

### **Change the Requirement for an Annual Convocation to a Biennial Convocation**

The main amendment is in Article 7.01, but it also requires deleting "annual" in Articles 6.05, 7.04, 9.08, 9.09, 10.02, 10.05, 10.06, 15.01 and 17.02.

The following is a summary of the Executive Council's rationale in proposing these amendments. The main purpose of the amendments is to address how the NALC might best deploy its resources and time to perform the mission the Holy Spirit has put before us. That mission has come into sharper focus in the 2020 Vision endorsed by the convocation. To be best equipped to succeed, the NALC needs the flexibility and nimbleness to invest its resources and time more effectively in service of Christ's Church.

This includes all parts of the NALC – congregations, mission districts, staff and committees. The NALC invests a significant amount of time, energy and resources for annual convocations and events. The average cost for congregations sending delegates to convocations is \$1,300 per delegate. The cost is greater if attendees are also participating in the other events during Lutheran Week.

Registration fees cover only about half the expenses of a convocation. Therefore, on average, the NALC subsidizes the event with \$110,000 to keep the cost manageable for congregations.

Annually, the NALC staff devotes 12% of its time, about 2,750 hours, to the convocation and Lutheran Week. A full-time position involves 2,080 hours of work per year, so more than one full-time equivalent NALC staff position is devoted to the annual event.

The amendments do not change Article 7.06, which allows for more frequent convocations. The bishop or the Executive Council may call for special convocations for specified purposes.

The Executive Council, deans and staff have had discussions about events and gatherings that could be held regionally in the years there is not a convocation. Regional events, with NALC continental leaders present, could potentially enable more people to attend an event beyond their mission district. Many of the valued experiences in the events at and preceding an annual convocation could be provided more broadly across the NALC at these events.

If congregations ratify the shift to biennial convocations, then the following amendments are in order to make that shift:

#### **Provide Flexibility for Elections to Shift to Biennial Convocations**

The election cycle of Executive Council and Court of Adjudication members is currently tied to annual convocations. The amendments to Articles 10.02 and 15.01 provide the flexibility to elect those members during the transition from annual to biennial convocations. The Executive Council would oversee the process, adjusting the timing and terms of office as needed.

#### **Change in the NALC Budget Process**

The 2020 Convocation accepted the amendment to Article 7.04 as a friendly amendment from a lay delegate. It specifies that each convocation is to adopt a budget for the next two calendar years.

#### **Quarterly Reports from the Executive Council**

During the discussion of the proposed amendments to shift to biennial convocations, an amendment to Article 10.05.l. was proposed to require the Executive Council to report all actions quarterly to congregations and clergy, as well as to each convocation.