**UPDATING YOUR CONGREGATION’S CONSTITUTION**

The Alaska Synod Constitution Review Committee has developed a tool for congregations to use when looking to update your Congregational Constitution. The Model Constitution for Congregations is available at elca.org It contains provisions that require the specific language with no changes, except where there are choices you must make based on how your congregation operates. These required provisions are noted with an \* before the section codes. Those provisions are noted on the Alaska Cheat Sheet. Download the model constitution and add what is specific to your congregation.

You will note in the Introduction to the Model Constitution that recommended that the Congregation Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions are included as codified provisions of your constitution and not stand-alone documents. In the process of updating your constitution the Alaska Synod encourages you to thoroughly evaluate your Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions to analyze if they are consistent with the provisions of your Constitution or if they are still relevant to your operation. During that process you can identify the appropriate Chapter and subsection provision to codify those bylaws into the constitution. A copy of your analysis on the Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions would be very helpful in the review. Follow the guidance in the Introduction to the Model Constitution for Congregations under Codification Explanation.

Congregations are required to submit their draft changes to their constitution, including the analysis of the Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions, to the Synod office. The Alaska Synod has a Constitution Review Committee that is responsible for reviewing those changes to ensure compliance with the instructions and the Model Constitution. Part of that review is to ensure consistency between provisions. If you are updating your constitution to include separate Bylaws or Continuing Resolutions, it would be helpful to have a copy of those document along with your analysis of the appropriateness of the Bylaw provisions into the Constitution. If you are not including your bylaws in your constitution revisions, please include a copy of your stand-alone bylaws and Continuing Resolutions for review.

This review may take 90 to 120 days. The Review Committee will notify you of our findings and recommendations. If the findings and recommendations are minor in nature you may be advised to make the noted corrections, if any, and have the congregation approve the revisions. If there are major issues you may be required to resubmit your corrected documents for a second review by the Committee. If the second review finds everything satisfactory, you will be notified you can have your congregation approve the revisions. If the second review still has unresolved issues, the Committee will recommend a meeting between the committee, the constitution drafters and the Bishop to determine a final course of action. Upon approval by the committee and any changes noted were made, the congregation may take action for approval of the constitution changes. After the congregation has approved the changes, the final document must be forwarded to the Synod office.