



September 8, 2021

Dear Congregations and Clergy of the North American Lutheran Church,

Grace and peace to you in the name of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

One of the NALC's Core Values is "Congregationally Focused." Congregational participation is a foundational principle of our church body's governance. By requiring congregational ratification of certain key decisions, the NALC ensures that its members are aware of and broadly supportive of those decisions.

At our recent NALC Mission Convocation in Corpus Christ, Texas, the delegates to the convocation voted to ratify amendments to Article 11 of the Constitution. As a result, each member congregation is asked to schedule a duly called congregational meeting for the purpose of voting "yes" or "no" to the convocation's action to amend portions of Article 11. A simple majority vote is required. This has to be done at a meeting of the entire congregation and not at a council meeting or any other sub-group meeting. **The deadline for voting on the ratification of Article 11 is within six months of the close of the 2021 NALC Mission Convocation — February 6, 2022.** It would be best to have a brief specially called meeting of the congregation well in advance of the deadline date.

#### EXPLANATION OF CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

The 2020 NALC Mission Convocation voted to postpone proposed amendments to Article 11, Regional Subdivisions, of the NALC Constitution. The amendments proposed last year would have named mission districts as the regional subdivision.

There was support for naming them as mission districts. The reason for postponing consideration of the amendments was to revise the amendments so the constitution clearly allows for mission districts to form mission regions. Several mission regions have already been formed in the NALC.

**BELOW IS WHAT WAS VOTED ON AND PASSED BY THE DELEGATION:**

(Deletions are marked with a strikethrough and additions are in a red font and underlined.)

**ARTICLE 11 – REGIONAL SUBDIVISIONS**

**11.01** Congregations shall join in collaboration as Mission Districts to fulfill most effectively the ministry and mission of the NALC, normally based on common geographic boundaries. Mission Districts may form Mission Regions for more effective ministry and mission as needed. Mission Regions shall have such organizational form and functions as shall be determined by the constituting Mission Districts. Such organization shall be done in consultation with the Bishop and subject to the approval of the Executive Council.

**11.02** Each ~~regional group~~ Mission District or Mission Region ~~of congregations~~ shall adopt appropriate governing documents that are consistent with the governing documents and practice of the NALC and shall include election of a Dean, adoption of a budget, and provision for supervision, mutual support of member congregations, and procedures necessary for carrying out its mission and ministry.

**11.03** The Deans, who shall be ordained ministers of the NALC, shall be accountable to the Bishop and work with the Bishop by conducting similar functions in their ~~respective areas~~ Mission Districts. Deans shall serve as pastor to ordained ministers, their families, and congregations, and will conduct a ministry of teaching and visitation with ordained ministers and congregations. Deans may continue to serve under the call of a congregation.

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Per the NALC Constitution, Article 17.03 states !Any amendment to this Constitution, prior to becoming effective, must be ratified by a two-thirds majority of congregations (i) that belonged to the NALC at the close of the Convocation that approved the amendment and (ii) that within six months after the close of the Convocation have voted on ratification in and through properly called congregational meetings.

And, “As a responsibility of NALC membership, congregations are expected to vote on the ratification of proposed constitutional amendments. For ratification to be valid, at least 50% of congregations belonging to the NALC at the close of the Convocation that approved the amendments must have voted on the question. Abstentions and invalid ballots shall not be considered for purposes either of counting the number of congregations that have voted on ratification or of determining whether the two-thirds majority has been achieved.”