

CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGE INSTRUCTIONS

MNO Synod – November 2014

(Revised May 2018)

Want to make a change to your congregations constitution? Did you know that any such changes must be ratified by the MNO Synod Council? To insure that you provide the Synod with the necessary information for that ratification to occur, please follow the instructions outlined below

All documentation related to a ratification request should be sent to:

The Secretary of the MNO Synod Council
935 Nesbitt Bay
Winnipeg MB R3T 1W6

Electronic submissions may be sent to mnosynod@elcic.ca

STEP 1 Advance Consultation

While not absolutely necessary, it is advisable to contact the Synod secretary once your congregational council has finalized the changes they wish to present to a congregational meeting. Synod can provide advice on both the suitability and wording of amendments that might avoid undue delays in the approval process (see Step 6 below).

STEP 2 Consult your existing governance documents

Your current constitution should have an article outlining the process for amending that document, most likely entitled Bylaws and Amendments. It will read something like this:

Amendments to this constitution may be proposed by the Congregational Council and shall be proposed by the council at the request of five voting members. Such proposed amendments shall be:

- a. *Read at two successive public services of the congregation or mailed to the voting members not less than thirty days before the meeting at which they are to be considered;*
- b. *Approved with or without change by a majority vote of those present and voting;*
- c. *Approved without further change at a second congregational meeting to be held no less than thirty days later by a two-thirds majority vote of those present and voting;*
- d. *Become effective upon official notice and approval by the Synod Council.*

Be sure to make note of any requirements pertaining to advance notice, the amount time between meetings and the number of votes needed for changes to be approved.

STEP 3 Provide a Rationale

Prepare a brief written rationale for the change or changes that have been agreed upon by your congregation. If the change you are submitting is related to the rescindment of an existing constitution and adoption of the new model constitution provided by the ELCIC national office, please indicate so in your rationale.

STEP 4 Supply a Strike-Through version of the change or changes

To clarify for the Synod Council exactly what is being changed in your constitution, provide a copy of the existing text of the Articles in question showing wording that is to be added or deleted. Deleted text should be indicated by a strike-through. Added text should be shown in bold print.

Here's an example of a hypothetical amendment to the specification of a quorum.

Article IV - Section II (b)

~~Ten~~ **Five** percent of the voting members, but not fewer than ~~30~~ **15** voting members shall constitute a quorum.

If you are replacing your existing constitution with the new model constitution provided by the ELCIC national office, a strikethrough copy is only necessary if you are proposing to alter the model in any way.

STEP 5 Provide copies of the Minutes from congregational meetings

For constitutional changes, a complete set of minutes from the meeting at which first reading was given and from the meeting at which second reading was given must be provided to the Synod.

The minutes for each meeting should clearly indicate:

- a) the date of meeting
- b) a statement that quorum was achieved
- c) that the motion (or motions) related to constitutional change were moved, seconded and carried by the necessary number of votes (i.e., simple or 2/3 majority).

Example of Motion from a Congregational Meeting

MSC CM 2015-6 That Article IV - Section II(b) of the constitution be amended to read as follows: Five percent of the voting members, but not fewer than 15 voting members shall constitute a quorum.

The motion was carried with a 2/3 majority.

(CM 2015-6 is an example of how a motion could be identified. MSC means moved, seconded, carried. CM means Congregational Meeting; 2015 refers to the year in which the motion was passed; 6 refers to a sequential numbering of motions passed by congregational meetings in a given year).

STEP 6 MNO Synod Council Review

Once all of the above information has been received, the Secretary will present it to the Synod Executive for review. If no further clarification is needed, proposed amendments will be forwarded to the Synod Council for consideration. If your proposed amendment is relatively routine in nature, an electronic meeting (i.e., by email) of council may be held to seek ratification. If the proposed change is more complex, it will be presented to council for its consideration at a regular council meeting. These meetings are held in March/April and November of each year.

Please remember that any constitutional changes approved by your congregation will not come into effect until they are ratified by Synod Council.