

Constitution and Bylaws of Grace Lutheran Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

ARTICLE I—MEMBERSHIP AND NAME

SECTION 1. Membership

This congregational unit shall be a member of Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, hereinafter designated as “Women of the ELCA.”

SECTION 2. Name

The name of this congregational unit shall be Grace Women of the ELCA.

ARTICLE II—STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

SECTION 1. Purpose

As a community of women created in the image of God, called to discipleship in Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves to grow in faith, affirm our gifts, support one another in our callings, engage in ministry and action, and promote healing and wholeness in the church, the society, and the world.

SECTION 2. Commitment

To accomplish the purpose of Women of the ELCA, women in this unit shall commit themselves to

- a. come together for study, support, and action;**
- b. participate in the ministry of Women of the ELCA beyond the congregation;**
- c. support financially the total program of Women of the ELCA; and**
- d. designate leadership that shall be in communication with the synodical and churchwide women’s organization.**

SECTION 3. Affiliation

This unit shall maintain affiliation with the synodical women’s organization to which it is assigned.

ARTICLE III—PARTICIPATION

SECTION 1. Composition

This unit shall be composed of those women who are members of Grace Lutheran Church, and/or indicate a commitment to the purposes of Women of the ELCA.

SECTION 2. Participation

Participation in this unit shall be open to all women in this congregation and other women who subscribe to the purpose.

SECTION 3. Congregational Membership

Women elected to leadership in this unit and elected as delegates to a convention of the synodical women's organization shall be voting members of a congregation or synodically authorized worshipping community of the ELCA.

ARTICLE IV—RELATIONSHIPS

SECTION 1. Congregation

This unit shall participate in the life and work of Grace Lutheran Church and report to the annual meeting(s). It may report regularly to the congregational council(s).

SECTION 2. Cluster or Conference

This unit shall participate in activities within the cluster or conference to which it is assigned.

SECTION 3. Synodical Women's Organization

This unit shall participate in the life and work of the Western Iowa Synodical Women's Organization and report annually to the synodical women's organization board.

In an interdependent partnership with the Western Iowa Synodical Women's Organization, this unit shall participate in the convention of the Western Iowa Synodical Women's Organization by

- Item 1. Electing a delegate and an alternate to represent the unit; and
- Item 2. Cooperating in the process for nomination of officers and board members of the synodical women's organization.

SECTION 4. Churchwide Women's Organization

- Item 1. This unit shall participate in the process for nomination of delegates to the Triennial Convention.
- Item 2. This unit shall participate in the process of nomination of officers and board members.

ARTICLE V—MEETINGS

SECTION 1. Program

Women of this unit shall come together regularly for study, support, and action.

SECTION 2. Business

There shall be a business meeting(s) held (at least annually) for purposes such as receiving reports, projecting plans, and electing leadership.

ARTICLE VI—LEADERSHIP

SECTION 1. Leaders (Officers)

This unit shall follow the team model of leadership to include a team leader, treasurer, and recording secretary.

SECTION 2. Duties of Leaders

- Item 1. Team Leader:** Prepare agenda and facilitate unit meetings, share with the board information from publications (Women of the ELCA Interchange, Church Women United Church Women News, Western Iowa Synodical Women's Scribe, etc.) and mailings received by the unit, prepare or see to information to be included in the congregational newsletter or Sunday worship folder
- Item 2. Unit Treasurer:** Present the treasurer's report at leadership team meeting, collect and process unit offerings, follow the Women of the ELCA remittance schedule as appropriate, pay bills in a timely manner, prepare for an annual review, prepare an annual Treasurer's report for inclusion in the Congregation's Annual Report, complete the necessary financial transactions resulting from team decisions.
- Item 3. Recording Secretary:** Record minutes of meetings, keep copy in secretary's notebook and distribute to board members, Send notice of upcoming meetings

SECTION 3. Duties of Unit Leadership Team

The leadership team is made up of the team leader, treasurer, recording secretary, and at least one member from each circle, and representatives at large for a team of no less than five women. All team members will have equal weight of voice and power in planning and accomplishing the ministries of the Women of the ELCA.

ARTICLE VII—PLANNING

SECTION 1. Program Areas and Goals

This unit shall engage in planning, giving attention to the program areas and goals established by Women of the ELCA.

SECTION 2. Program Planning

The unit leadership team shall be responsible for the total program planning for the unit. Any committee formed to implement this planning will include at least one member of the leadership team.

ARTICLE VIII—NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

SECTION 1. Nominating Committee

There shall be a Nominating Committee of at least three persons to present nominees to the leadership team for election by this unit.

SECTION 2. Elections

- Item 1.** Elections shall be for the following terms: team leader-not less than three years with no reelection, treasurer-unlimited, recording secretary-two years with one reelection.
- Item 2. Representatives** from circles are selected by each circle. Representatives at large will be elected at a general meeting. It is preferred, but not required, that representatives will serve for two years. The change of representatives will be staggered to maintain a level of experience and consistency on the team.

ARTICLE IX—FINANCE

SECTION 1. Fiscal Year

The fiscal year for this unit shall be January 1 through December 31, unless the institution in which the unit is situated expressly requires a different fiscal year.

SECTION 2. Administration

This unit shall develop and administer its own financial plan or budget that shall reflect support for the total program of Women of the ELCA.

SECTION 3. Transmittal

This unit shall transmit funds regularly in accordance with established procedures.

SECTION 4. Reports

This unit shall provide annual financial reports to participants and as required by the institution in which the special unit is situated.

SECTION 5. Financial accountability

An annual accounting compilation or review of this unit's financial records shall be conducted by a financial review committee of the unit.

ARTICLE X – DISSOLUTION CLAUSE

In the event of the dissolution of this congregational unit, any surplus property remaining after the payment of its debts shall be disposed of by transfer to the churchwide women's organization or its successor provided that said organization is, at the time of dissolution, a qualified organization as described in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Service Code of 1986 or comparable provision, and, if not, to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or its successor, and, if not, to one or more organizations so qualified in such proportions as the leadership of this unit shall determine.

ARTICLE XI—BYLAWS AND AMENDMENTS

SECTION 1. Bylaws

This unit may adopt bylaws not in conflict with this constitution by a majority vote, provided they have been presented in writing at the previous meeting.

SECTION 2. Amendments

- Item 1.** This constitution may be amended at any regular business meeting or special meeting of this unit by a two-thirds vote of the women present and voting, provided the proposed amendment has been presented at the previous meeting and is consistent with the purpose of Women of the ELCA.
- Item 2.** Amendments to the bylaws may be adopted by the unit by a majority vote after having been presented at the previous meeting.
- Item 3.** Whenever the secretary of Women of the ELCA officially informs the congregational units that the Women of the ELCA Triennial Convention has amended the approved Model Constitution and Bylaws for Congregational units, whether by setting out

alternate clauses or otherwise, such provisions shall be introduced at once into this constitution and notice of this action shall be forwarded to the synodical president.