

Nebraska District
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

Bylaws 2009



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THE LUTHERAN CHURCH—MISSOURI SYNOD
NEBRASKA DISTRICT BYLAWS

I. Name

The official name of this synodical district shall be The Nebraska District of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

II. Mission

The mission of the Nebraska District is to resource congregations, leaders, and related organizations in their mission of discipling the saved and proclaiming Christ to a lost and changing world.

This overarching mission guides the District as it acts in support of and on behalf of its member congregations.

III. District Organization

A. Relationship to Synod

The Synod's Constitution and Bylaws are hereby agreed to and adopted and shall be used as a guide to the proper interpretation and application of these Bylaws. If the Synod makes bylaw changes not yet adopted by the District, the Synod Bylaws shall be controlling.

B. Membership

Membership in the District shall be determined on the basis of the Constitution and Bylaws of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

C. District Convention

I. Convention Administration

- a. The regular District convention shall be held in the year immediately preceding the general convention of the Synod.
- b. Special District conventions shall be convened in accordance with the Constitution and Bylaws of the Synod.
- c. The District conventions shall be governed by the Constitution and Bylaws of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, insofar as these may be applicable.
- d. The times and places of the District conventions shall be determined by the District Board of Directors.
- e. Notice stating the place, day, and hour of the convention, together with the Convention Workbook, shall be delivered not less than thirty (30) nor more than fifty (50) days before the date of the convention to each delegate.
- f. The voting delegates at the convention shall be the one (1) called pastor and one (1) lay delegate from each congregation or parish. If a pastor is called to two or more congregations,

these shall be regarded as one parish and shall be entitled to only one lay vote.

- g. At least one-third of the congregations of the District, as represented by at least one of their respective voting delegates, shall constitute a quorum.
2. Convention Organization
- A. The Nominations Committee
 - 1. This Committee shall be elected by the District convention to serve for the next three years and the succeeding convention.
 - 2. This Committee shall consist of three (3) ordained ministers, three (3) lay members, and one (1) commissioned minister.
 - 3. This Committee shall receive nominations for positions to be elected. There must be at least two (2) candidates for each position to be filled, unless otherwise specified by these Bylaws. If fewer than two (2) candidates are nominated, the Nominations Committee shall complete the slate of candidates for each of the following:
 - (a) District Secretary
 - (b) One (1) member and one (1) alternate for the Synod Committee on Convention Nominations (in years determined by the Bylaws of the Synod)
 - (c) Nominations Committee
 - (d) Constitution Committee, comprised of two (2) ordained ministers, one (1) lay member, who is preferably an attorney, and one (1) commissioned minister
 - (e) Members of the Board of Regents of Concordia University, Seward, Nebraska, elected by the District, comprised of one (1) ordained minister, one (1) lay member, and one (1) commissioned minister
 - 4. This Committee shall certify the nominations received from the congregations for the following:
 - (a) The ten (10) additional members of the District Board of Directors, consisting of two (2) commissioned ministers and eight (8) lay members
 - (b) The four (4) regional Vice-Presidents for the Board of Directors
 - (c) Any other elected officers
 - 5. This Committee shall present to the convention the slate of circuit counselors to be ratified by the convention. Such ratification shall constitute election.

6. This Committee shall utilize the following procedures for nominations:
 - (a) At least six (6) months prior to the convention, solicit from all District congregations and individuals their nominations for all available positions other than Board of Directors.
 - (b) All persons receiving at least five (5) nominations will be included on the ballot. Candidates can be nominated for more than one position.
 - (c) Complete the ballot for each position not fully nominated.
 - (d) At least thirty (30) days and not more than fifty (50) days prior to the date of the convention, distribute background information on all persons who have been nominated and agree to run.
 - (e) Nominations from the floor must be accompanied by a completed nomination form with appropriate signatures, and biography. The forms for nomination and biography shall be the same as those used in the pre-convention nomination process.
3. Convention Election of Officers and Boards
 - A. Committee on Elections
 1. The Committee shall make the necessary arrangements for, and shall supervise the elections and tabulation of votes.
 2. The Committee shall report the official results of each election to the convention and shall file a written report of the tabulation of votes on each election, certified by the chairman and at least one other member of the committee, with the convention chairman and the District Secretary.
 3. Any ballots in each election shall be preserved by the chairman of the committee until the close of the convention and shall then be destroyed.
 - B. Majority Vote

A majority of all votes cast shall be required for election to all elective positions.
 - C. Nominations and Candidacy for District President, Vice-Presidents, Commissioned Ministers, and Lay Members of the Board of Directors
 1. District President
 - (a) Each congregation shall be entitled to nominate one (1) ordained minister as candidate for District President.

- (b) Candidates for the office of District President shall be at least the five (5) ordained ministers who receive the greatest number of nominations and agree to serve, if elected.
- 2. Regional Vice-Presidents
 - (a) Each congregation shall be entitled to nominate one (1) ordained minister as candidate for regional Vice-President. Such nominee shall be from within the respective region in which the congregation is located.
 - (b) Candidates for regional Vice-President shall be at least the four (4) ordained ministers in each region who receive the greatest number of nominations and agree to serve, if elected.
- 3. Commissioned Ministers
 - (a) Each congregation of the area electing shall be entitled to nominate one (1) commissioned minister from the roster of their area for membership as commissioned minister on the District Board of Directors.
 - (b) Candidates for commissioned minister on the Board of Directors shall be at least the three (3) commissioned ministers in the electing area who receive the greatest number of nominations and agree to serve, if elected.
- 4. Lay Members
 - (a) Each congregation of each region shall be entitled to nominate two (2) lay members who are presently members of a congregation of the respective region.
 - (b) Candidates for the lay members on the Board of Directors shall be at least the two (2) lay members in the electing area who receive the greatest number of nominations and agree to serve, if elected.
- 5. Nominations from the floor must be accompanied by a completed nomination form with appropriate signatures, and biography. The forms for nomination and biography shall be the same as those used in the pre-convention nomination process.
- 6. The District Secretary shall mail ballots to each congregation of the District for use in nominating candidates for the various elective positions, together with a list of eligible ordained ministers and commissioned ministers from their respective regions and areas.

7. Each nominating ballot shall be signed by the president and recording secretary of the congregation and shall be sent to the District Secretary not later than four (4) months prior to the opening date of the convention.
 8. The District Secretary, together with the Chair of the Nominations Committee, shall tabulate the nominations and shall report to the convention, by means of the Convention Workbook.
- D. Election of District President, Vice-Presidents, Commissioned Ministers and Lay Members of the Board of Directors
1. District President
Each voting delegate shall be entitled to cast a vote for one candidate for District President. If no candidate receives a majority of the votes cast, the one receiving the smallest number of votes shall be eliminated and a second vote taken. Such procedure shall be continued until one candidate receives a majority of the votes cast.
 2. Vice-Presidents
 - (a) After the results of the presidential election have been announced, there shall be an election of four (4) regional Vice-Presidents. Each voting delegate shall cast one (1) vote for a Vice-President in each region. If no candidate receives a majority of the votes cast, the convention shall follow the same procedure as outlined for election of president. The candidate receiving the majority vote in each region shall be elected.
 - (b) After the regional Vice-Presidents have been elected, there shall be a separate election for purpose of ranking. Delegates are to vote for the First Vice-President. The Vice-President receiving the highest number of votes shall be declared the First Vice-President, second highest number of votes shall be declared Second Vice-President, third highest number of votes shall be declared Third Vice-President, and the remaining Vice-President shall be declared Fourth Vice-President.
 3. Commissioned Ministers
Each voting delegate at the convention of the District shall be entitled to vote for one (1) candidate of the area electing for a commissioned minister member on the Board of Directors. The candidate receiving the majority vote in each area shall be elected.
 4. Lay Members

Each voting delegate at the convention of the District shall be entitled to vote for one (1) candidate in each of the regions for lay members on the Board of Directors. The candidate receiving a majority vote in each region shall be elected.

E. Order of Names on Ballot
The names of the candidates in all elections shall be placed on the election ballot in alphabetical order and without any distinctive marks.

F. Order of Elections
Each election is completed before the next is begun.

1. District President
2. Regional Vice-Presidents
3. Ranking of Vice-Presidents
4. Ratification of circuit counselors
5. District Secretary
6. Additional members of Board of Directors
 - (1) Lay members
 - (2) Commissioned ministers
7. Nominations Committee
8. Constitution Committee
9. Members of Board of Regents
10. Member of Synod's Committee for Convention Nominations, in years required

4. Convention Arrangements
The President, in consultation with the District Board of Directors, will create any groups needed to stage the convention.

D. Constitution Committee

1. The Committee, as provided for in the Bylaws of the Synod, shall advise the District, circuit forums, and individual congregations in constitutional matters, and shall study new constitutions and constitutional revisions, regarding conformity with the Synod's Constitution and Bylaws. It shall maintain a liaison with the synodical Commission on Constitutional Matters.
2. The Committee shall keep the District Bylaws up to date and in harmony with the synodical Handbook and the resolutions of the District.

E. Regions and Areas

1. The District shall be divided into four (4) regions, which shall be the congregations of the circuits as listed in the following manner:
 - a. Region A: McCook, Holdrege, Hastings, Kearney, Grand Island, Western Sandhills
 - b. Region B: York, Lincoln North, Lincoln South, Deshler, Beatrice, Falls City, Seward
 - c. Region C: Ainsworth, Plainview, Norfolk, Wayne, West Point

- d. Region D: Columbus, Fremont, Omaha North, Omaha South, Omaha West
- 2. The District shall be divided into areas as follows:
 - a. Area I: Regions A-B
 - b. Area II: Regions C-D

- F. Circuit Forums and Convocations
Circuit Forums and convocations will meet and function as required by the synodical Handbook.
- G. District Conferences
District Conferences will meet and function as required by the synodical Handbook.
- H. Synodical Conventions – Representation
The number of delegates and advisory delegates and the manner in which they are selected to the conventions of the Synod shall be in accordance with the synodical Handbook.

IV. District Administration

- A. District Board of Directors
 - 1. Membership
 - a. The Board of Directors of the Nebraska District shall be constituted as follows: The District President, the four (4) regional Vice-Presidents (with one [1] from each region), the District Secretary, two (2) commissioned ministers (with one [1] from each area), and eight (8) lay members (with two [2] from each region of the District). Each elected member of the Board shall be from a different congregation. The District Treasurer shall be a member with non-voting status.
 - b. All members of the Board of Directors must be members of a congregation holding membership in the District. Should a regional Vice-President, a commissioned minister, or a lay member of the Board of Directors join a congregation outside his/her governing area or region, but still within the District, he/she shall complete his/her term of office.
 - 2. Term of Office
 - a. President, regional Vice-Presidents, and Secretary shall serve no more than four (4) consecutive three (3) year terms.
 - b. Commissioned ministers and elected lay members of the Board of Directors shall serve no more than two (2) consecutive six (6) year terms.
 - 3. Purposes
The central purposes of the Board of Directors are to assure that:
 - a. The District accomplishes its mission to resource congregations, leaders, and related organizations in their

mission of discipling the saved and proclaiming Christ to a lost and changing world; and

b. The business and legal affairs of the District are conducted properly.

4. Functions

- a. The Board of Directors shall have all the powers and duties, which have been accorded to it by the laws of the State of Nebraska, the Articles of Incorporation of the District, the synodical Constitution and Bylaws, the Bylaws of the District, and the resolutions of the District Convention. The Board of Directors shall be vested with the general management and supervision of the District's business and legal affairs.
- b. The Board of Directors shall provide for the coordination of the policies and directives of the District as authorized by the Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, and District Convention resolutions. The Board of Directors shall administer and carry out plans and policies that have been directed by the District Convention.
- c. The Board of Directors shall be the trustees of the District.
- d. The Board of Directors shall be accountable to the District Convention.
- e. The Board of Directors shall appoint such committees and task forces as are necessary to carry out the work of the Board of Directors.
- f. The Board of Directors shall appoint a District Treasurer.
- g. The Board of Directors shall appoint a legal advisor.
- h. The Board of Directors shall approve all contemplated District-wide appeals for funds before individual congregations are approached. This does not apply to appeals for funds made by The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod or by a District Convention.
- i. The Board of Directors shall issue any calls to rostered District staff upon recommendation by the District President.
- j. The Board of Directors shall establish the remuneration of elected District officers and annually review the human resources policies of the District.
- k. The Board of Directors shall be responsible for fulfilling its duty as assigned to it under the “Synodical Dispute Resolution” and any other duties required by the synodical Handbook.
- l. The Board of Directors shall require that all groups reporting to the Board submit long-range and short-range plans of District work, which shall include operating and capital budgets.
- m. The Board of Directors shall receive all minutes and reports of groups that report to the Board. It may also ask for special reports on the functioning of any group.

5. Meeting
 - a. The Board of Directors shall meet at least four (4) times a year. The act of the Board in setting the date, time, and place of the next regular meeting, in furnishing each member of the Board with a copy of the minutes of the previous meeting, and a proposed agenda shall constitute adequate notice of regular meetings. Other meetings may be held on the call of the District President or the Chairman of the Board with notice to be received by each member not less than ten (10) days prior to such meeting. A majority of the voting Board members shall constitute a quorum for any Board meeting.
 - b. The Board of Directors shall elect its own chairman and vice-chairman.
 6. Vacancies of Board of Directors

A vacancy shall be filled by appointment by the Board of Directors.
- B. The Officers, Circuit Counselors, Groups, Individual Appointees
1. Officers
 - a. The elective officers of the District shall be President, four (4) Vice-Presidents, and a Secretary.
 - b. The appointive officer of the District shall be the District Treasurer.
 2. Boards and Committees directly responsible to the convention
 - a. District Board of Directors
 - b. Nominations Committee
 3. Circuit Counselors

The election and duties of the circuit counselors shall be in accordance with the Bylaws of the Synod and District.
 4. Establish Groups and Their Duties
 - a. The Board of Directors will establish any groups mandated by the Synod Constitution and Bylaws.
 - b. The Board of Directors will establish any groups required by the District Convention.
 - c. The Board of Directors will establish any groups it deems necessary to accomplish the mission of the District.
- C. Duties of District Convention, and Board Mandated Groups
1. Support achievement of the mission of the District
 2. Accomplish the tasks assigned
- D. The District President
1. As pastor to all workers in the ministry, the President shall:
 - a. concern himself with the spiritual, professional, and personal well-being of the workers of the District
 - b. be the overseer (Acts 20:28) of the workers in the District, and may call upon circuit counselors and Vice Presidents to assist him

- c. visit as many circuits as possible to interpret synodical and District policy, programs, and resolutions
 - d. encourage the brethren, and initiate discussions and consultations with them at as many pastoral and teachers' conferences as possible and
 - e. prepare or provide theological studies for presentation at the conferences of professional church workers
2. As chief executive officer of the District, the president shall:
- a. execute those duties as outlined in the Handbook of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.
 - b. exercise supervision over doctrine, life, and administration of the office of the ordained and commissioned ministers of the District, and in the congregations of the District.
 - c. represent and be the representative of the District and its Board of Directors when these are not in session.
 - d. be the final interpreter of District and/or Board of Directors policy until the District and/or Board meet.
 - e. be in continual communication with the administrative assistants of the District on the planning and implementation of synodical and District programs.
 - f. represent by virtue of his office the District to the Synod and shall represent the Synod in his District.
 - g. be concerned with the specific social, economic, and political problems and needs of the District as the church's program relates to them.
 - h. make appointments as provided by these Bylaws or as are needed to carry on, in proper order, the work of the District. Any appointment may be terminated by the President and the Board of Directors with or without the show of cause.
 - i. be concerned with the specific problems and needs of denominational relationships in the District.
 - j. hire such personal staff as necessary to carry out his duties with the approval of the Board of Directors.
 - k. be a full-time executive.
 - l. have care of the interest of all congregations.
3. Vacancy in the District Presidency
- a. Salary adjustments on termination of services
 - (1) If the President fails to be re-elected, or if he reaches the limit of terms he can serve, he shall continue to receive full salary for a period of one month per year of service as District President, with the total period not less than five months. If he accepts other permanent employment before the end of the severance payment period, his salary shall cease by the first of the following month. Payment shall also be made for accrued leave time in accordance with the District personnel policies.

- (2) If the President resigns his office, full salary shall be paid to include the effective date of resignation. Payment shall also be made for accrued leave time in accordance with the District personnel policies.
 - (3) If the President retires while in office, he shall be paid full salary to include the last day of the calendar month in which the retirement is effective. Payment shall also be made for accrued leave time in accordance with the District personnel policies, plus severance pay of one week for each full year of service as president.
 - (4) If the President dies while in office, full salary shall be paid to include the day of death plus; full salary for thirty (30) additional days, accrued leave time in accordance with the District personnel policies, and severance pay of one week for each full year of service as president.
- b. If the office of the President becomes vacant, the First Vice-President shall serve as President until the next convention, with his duties and compensation determined by the Board of Directors.
 - c. If the President is unable to serve, the duties and responsibilities of the office of the President shall be assumed by the First Vice-President whenever the Board of Directors determines that the President is unable to serve in the capacity because of his prolonged illness or disability; and the First Vice-President shall remain as the acting President until the Board of Directors determines that such illness or disability has been removed.

E. The District Vice-Presidents

- 1. The regional Vice-Presidents shall act as liaison between the District and the circuits in his respective region.
- 2. The Vice-Presidents shall represent the President upon his request, and shall perform such other duties as assigned by the District President.
- 3. Vacancy in the Vice-Presidency
The regional Vice-President vacancy shall be filled by appointment by the Board of Directors and that person shall become the Fourth Vice-President of the District.

F. The District Secretary

The District Secretary shall be an officer of the District. As such, it shall be his duty to:

- 1. Record all proceedings of the District Convention.
- 2. Record all proceedings of the District Board of Directors.
- 3. Assist the District President in arranging for the publication and distribution of the Proceedings of the District conventions.

4. Send congregations ballots for District President, regional Vice-Presidents, commissioned minister, and lay members for the Board of Directors.
5. Perform such other work as the District Board of Directors or District President may assign to him from time to time, and such other duties as are assigned in other sections of the Bylaws.
6. Serve as a member and Secretary of the Constitution Committee.
7. In the event of a vacancy in this office, for any cause, the District Board of Directors, with the approval of the District President, shall appoint a successor to fill the unexpired term.
8. Assign District Reconcilers as needed, in accordance with the synodical Handbook.

G. The District Treasurer

1. Qualifications

- a. A member of a congregation of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.
- b. Bondable.
- c. Have a knowledgeable background of financial matters.

2. Duties

- a. Be subject to the regulations of the District, and as directed by the Board of Directors, receive and disburse all District monies, and keep an accurate account of them.
- b. The Treasurer's direct responsibility shall be to the Board of Directors, but shall serve as an assistant to the President of the District when such services are not inconsistent with his/her primary duties.
- c. Carry out other activities associated with the position.

V. Amendments to the Bylaws

Amendments to the Bylaws may be made, provided they are:

- A. In accordance with the Constitution and Bylaws of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and the laws of the State of Nebraska.
- B. Submitted to the District Constitution Committee and the Synod Commission on Constitutional Matters for clearance prior to presentation to the convention.
- C. Presented in writing to a convention of the District.
- D. Adopted by the affirmative vote of a majority of the delegates present and voting.