

To: Constitution Committee

Members: Christa Boileau, Luke Flanscha, Lori Hill, and Joe Heron

From: Church Officers

Date: 20 July 2025

Subject: Recommendations and Issues for Review – Church Constitution

Dear Constitution Committee,

Thank you for your willingness to serve the congregation in this key role. The Church Council has completed an initial review of the current Constitution and would like to formally submit the following issues and recommendations for your committee's consideration. These observations represent areas of concern, ambiguity, or omission within the current document. Where applicable, we have also noted instances where clarification or revision may be advisable.

Committee General Recommendations:

Committee recommendations to Church Council by Aug 10-

Council Drafts amendments-separate amendment per issue raised. Recommend the voters assembly votes on each item separately.

Upon the amendment recommendations completed, committee will reconvene to review drafted amendments

Add clarification to voter member definition - exclude individuals on mission list (Elders would scrub prior to voters meeting) or add requirement for attendance prior to voters meeting

- Quorum is only 20% so it seems that status as a communicant is not sufficient
- Options are:
 - Create a "forcing function" to scrub the mission list
 - Create an attendance requirement (church or previous voter's meetings).
Recommendation: voters meetings as they are much easier to track.

Create bylaws to establish/ clarify procedural issues

- Constitution = durable, guiding document, supercedes bylaws, amendments approved by district.
 - Bylaws = procedural/ how-to, specifics, easier to change, subordinate to constitution
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1. Parliamentary Procedure

Issue: The constitution does not currently adopt any formal rules for conducting meetings.

Recommendation: We recommend the formal adoption of *Robert's Rules of Order* as the standard parliamentary procedure for all Voter's Assembly and Church Council meetings. This would bring consistency to our practices and help resolve procedural confusion during discussions and motions.

Committee Recommendations:

Robert's Rules of Order-Parliamentary Procedure-truncated version/current version is 700 pages and for profit. Lori will look into the uses of versions not-for-profit use or, a checklist available for use

2. Member Accountability for Minutes

Issue: Some members have raised concerns about issues already addressed in published minutes.

Recommendation: Add a statement clarifying that it is each Voting Member's responsibility to stay informed by reviewing monthly meeting minutes, which are posted on the church bulletin board.

Committee Recommendation:

Emailing the minutes out by the council secretary, as there are still concerns. How are new issues brought to the council for the voters' assembly? How are they brought up? Add an addition to the constitution bylaws detailing how to bring things to the council for discussion and vote by a member.

3. Article VIII – Section Title and Structure

Issue: Article VIII is titled "Officers" but also includes information about the Church Council.

Recommendation: Either retitle Article VIII to better reflect its dual focus (e.g., "Officers and Church Council") or separate it into two distinct articles: one for Officers and one for the Church Council. This change would improve clarity and organization.

Committee concurs, see comments on issue 4

4. Distinction Between Officers, Board Members, and Church Council

Issue: There is a lack of clarity in the constitution about the relationship and distinction between Officers, Board Chairpersons, and the Church Council.

Current Language Review: The opening sentence of Article VIII — “The leadership structure of the Congregation shall be the Officers of the Church followed by the Chairperson of the Boards...” — is vague and does not clearly define roles or voting rights.

Recommendation: Expand this section to explicitly define:

- Who constitutes the Church Council?
- Make clear who has voting rights during Council meetings.
- How authority is delegated and decisions are made within the Council.

Committee Recommendations:

Add Church Council to the title of the article.

Define who has voting rights and who serves as the tie-breaker. Define how authority is delegated, and if the chairman is a voting member.

- Is pastor a (voting) member of the council?
- Are board chairs voters?
- Who heads the board of finance

Pastor responsibility - responsibility (handout)

Chairman responsibility-paid church staff, board of maintenance, board of finance

5. How Church Council Meetings Are Conducted

Issue: While we currently follow *Robert’s Rules of Order* during Council meetings, the constitution provides no formal guidance.

Recommendation: Include a paragraph in the constitution that defines how Church Council meetings are to be conducted. This should specify:

- That Robert’s Rules of Order governs the meeting.
- That all board members may present reports.

Committee Recommendations:

Clarify whether this is this board or council members under bullet 2?

Any member of the church may present at the council meeting (to our knowledge) is there concern about board members presenting reports?

6. Business Practices for Accepting and Approving Bids

Issue: The constitution does not address how bids for church maintenance and services should be managed. Concerns have been raised about the fairness and transparency of awarding contracts, especially when congregation members submit bids.

Recommendation: Add a section outlining the following:

- A minimum of three bids must be solicited for all non-emergency maintenance projects above a specified threshold (e.g., \$500 or \$1,000).
- Bids submitted by church members will only be accepted if they are at cost for materials and include no labor or profit margin.
- No member should profit financially from doing business with the church unless explicitly approved by a supermajority vote of the Voters' Assembly.

Committee Recommendations:

A minimum of 3 bids is specified; the church will attempt to find a member to volunteer their time and purchase the materials. If time is of the essence, a contractor will be located to complete the work.

Select bullet two or three - you can't have both. Do we want to exclude members from getting business from the church? The trustee will receive three competing bids, which will not be shared with other contractors, and the trustee will not profit from the contract. The vote to approve bids by church members should be silent or blind.

7. Spending Limits of the Church Council

Issue: The constitution does not define a maximum dollar amount that the Church Council may approve for discretionary or scheduled spending without Voters' Assembly approval.

Recommendation: Include a clause setting a financial threshold (e.g., \$2,000–\$5,000) for Church Council expenditures on non-emergency projects such as grounds improvements or new equipment.

- Emergency repairs (e.g., HVAC failure, roof leak) may be exempt, but the Council should notify the congregation afterward.
- Anything above the threshold for non-emergency projects should require approval at a properly called Voter's Assembly.

Committee Recommendations:

Information on how the rental property is separated and managed differently from the church and parsonage. Are all the processes the same for all three, or is there some differentiation? Rental should be based on income or similar, vs the church and parsonage?

- We recommend that the church defines the purpose of the rental? Is it for investment, income, to assist members of the church, etc.?
- Does that change how we manage it?

Emergency - define an emergency as an inoperable building for its intended use (house of worship, living space, etc.) or significant damage to the structure if not fixed, threshold to be set. We don't *need* hot water in the church but we do in the living spaces, etc.

Non-emergency matters can wait, but the cap in the previous notes on recommendations for non-emergency matters.

Catastrophic event-take care of and worry about the votes later. Example: a hurricane drops trees on the roof and we have leaks. Current process is we wait for church, announce a voters meeting, wait 2 weeks to have the meeting, vote.

8. Summary of Recommended Changes

To summarize, the Church Council recommends:

- Adopting Robert's Rules of Order for all formal meetings.
- Clarifying the member's responsibility for reviewing posted minutes.
- Reorganizing and retitling Article VIII to better distinguish Officers and Church Council members.
- Defining how business is conducted at Council meetings.
- Establishing formal processes for maintenance bids and spending thresholds.

Notes to the Committee

Please understand that the above concerns are recommendations only and are not binding upon the Committee. You are free to accept, revise, or reject any of the suggestions provided. Furthermore, the Committee is not limited to these topics. You are encouraged to review the Constitution in its entirety and bring forth any other issues, improvements, or clarifications you deem appropriate.

The Committee will be responsible for preparing a summary of its findings and any proposed changes for presentation to the congregation during the upcoming Voters' Assembly on August

17th. One member of the committee will need to volunteer to speak on behalf of the committee and brief the congregation on your review and recommendations.

Committee closing recommendations:

Members on the mission list are not eligible to vote.

Criteria to come off the mission list.

The Board of Elders should review the mission list before each Voters' Meeting.

Scrub politically correct language from the constitution

Sign constitution once when you become a member, control the most current version.

Quorum is 20%. It is not hard to "overwhelm" the vote. Voting membership should be more clearly defined.

Expectations and Conduct

In conducting this task, the Committee is asked to observe the following ethical and procedural standards:

- Work collaboratively and respectfully with one another.
- Maintain confidentiality where appropriate during deliberations.
- Avoid personal bias and focus solely on what is in the best interest of the church's governance and mission.
- Submit any proposed amendments in a clear and readable format that can be reviewed by the Church Council and congregation prior to the vote.

We thank you again for your dedication to this important process and for your service to the church. Please let the Church Council know if you need any additional materials, meeting space, or support during your review process.

In Christ,
Wesley Price
Chairman
Our Redeemer Lutheran Church