Proposed changes to the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA for consideration at the 2027 Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Assembly

The following are being posted at least six (6) months prior to the 2027 synod assembly to allow for proper consideration by the Synod.

1. Term limit on the office of Vice President

The terms of the offices of vice president, secretary, and treasurer are each set at 4 years. The office of vice president is the only office in which service is limited to three consecutive terms. Discussion with the Executive Committee centered on making the term of service for vice president, secretary, and treasurer consistent with each other. This could take one of two forms: either limit service in each office to three consecutive terms, or remove the term limitation for the office of vice president.

Using the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA as a guide, in which there are no term limits for the officers, the Executive Committee proposed, and Synod Council concurred with, removing the term limitation from the office of the vice president of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council proposes to the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Assembly that bylaw S8.21.01. be removed from the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of this synod.

~~**S8.21.01.** The vice president may serve no more than three terms consecutively.~~

2. Delineation of Conflicts of Interest

The action of the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America recommended several amendments to and/or additions of non-required provisions to the Constitutions for Synods. Among these was an addition of a new S10.06. to the constitution which delineated suggested language marking conflicts of interest for synod staff.

This recommended addition was proposed to the 2026 Assembly of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod under the provisions delineated in S18.12. This provision allows for the adoption of non-required provisions recommended by the ELCA Churchwide Assembly with less than six (6) months notification, provided the language proposed by the Churchwide Assembly is adopted *without alteration or amendment*.

At the 2026 Synod Assembly, discussion ensued, with amendments proposed and adopted regarding the gendered language describing who is covered by this provision. There was also discussion, without formally proposed amendments, regarding how distant or close the limitation on relationships should be in order for the determination of conflict of interest to be applied.

Because the proposed addition of S10.06. was not available six (6) months prior to the Assembly, such amendments were not in order. Consequently S10.06. as *amended* and approved by the Assembly could not be ratified by the ELCA Church Council, and is not included in the

current version of the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the ELCA.

Below is the language adopted by the 2026 Synod Assembly which was not permitted inclusion in the synod's constitution. The Synod Council proposes this version of S10.06. to the 2027 Synod Assembly for further consideration and possible adoption.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council proposes to the 2027 Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Assembly that provision S10.06. be added to the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of this synod, with the subsequent renumbering of the provisions following the insertion of this new provision:

S10.06. **No person related to a synod staff member shall be eligible for nomination to or membership on the Synod Council or the following synod committees: Candidacy Committee, Finance Committee, Nominating Committee, Mutual Ministry Committee, Consultation Committee, and the Committee on Discipline. For this purpose, a related individual is one who, with respect to the synod employee, is a spouse, parent, child, sibling, uncle, aunt, niece, nephew, grandparent, grandchild, including corresponding members of blended families and in-laws (parent, child, or sibling of a spouse, spouse of a sibling, or the parent or sibling of the spouse of a sibling).**

These proposals are submitted for your reflection and consideration. As they come with six (6) months notification they may be:

+ Adopted as presented
+ Amended in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order and then adopted
+ Not adopted at all

Thank you for your prayerful consideration of these proposed amendments.

Respectfully submitted,
The Rev. Karl M. Richard, Secretary
Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA