

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS
Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod,
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Chapter 12
MISSION DISTRICTS

***S12.01. This Synod shall establish conferences, clusters, coalitions, or other area subdivisions within its territory as specified in the Bylaws. The purpose of such groupings shall be to foster interdependent relationships among congregations, institutions, and synodical and churchwide units for mission purposes.**

BLS12.01.a. This Synod shall be divided into Mission Districts, as follows: Bethlehem-Easton, East Berks, Hazleton-Lehigh, Lehigh, Northern Lehigh Valley, Pocono, Schuylkill, Scranton-Wilkes-Barre, and West Berks.

- b. Mission Districts shall be agents of the Church's mission on their respective territories. They shall study, plan, and implement ministries, challenging all congregations on their territories to participate fully in the life and mission of the Church.
- c. Requests by individual congregations for assignment to a different Mission District shall be acted upon by the Synod Council.
- d. Each Mission District shall have an Assembly, which shall meet at least annually.
 - 1) The Mission District Assembly shall consist of the following rostered persons under call to congregations: pastors, associates in ministry, deaconesses of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and diaconal ministers, and the same number and category of lay representatives as each congregation has to the Synod Assembly. The executive of each Church-affiliated institution or agency on the District territory shall designate two representatives to the Mission District Assembly, one of whom shall be a layperson. The status of "official visitor" shall be given to ordained ministers, to associates in ministry, to deaconesses of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and to diaconal ministers, living on the territory of the Mission District, who are either retired or are engaged in extra-parish service. The Mission District Assembly shall also consist of those persons of a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by a Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America who serve a congregation on the Mission District territory.
 - 2) The Mission District Assembly shall elect a Dean from among the clergy of the Mission District, a secretary, and such other persons as may be assigned by this Synod's constitution and bylaws. They shall serve terms of three years, and shall serve no more than two terms consecutively.
 - 3) The Dean shall be elected by ecclesiastical ballot, and a majority of the votes cast shall be necessary for election. If no one is elected on the first ballot, it shall be considered the nominating ballot, and the second ballot shall be limited to the five persons (plus ties) who receive the greatest number of votes on the first ballot. If no one is elected on the second ballot, the third ballot shall be limited to the two persons (plus ties) who receive the greatest number of votes on the second ballot.
 - 4) The secretary of the Mission District shall be elected from nominees proposed either by the Mission District's Nominating Committee or from the floor of the Mission

District Assembly, and a majority of the votes cast shall be necessary for election. If no one is elected on the first ballot, the second ballot shall be limited to the two persons (plus ties) who receive the greatest number of votes on the first ballot. This same procedure shall be followed for other elections by the Mission District Assembly.

- 5) The terms of the Dean and the secretary of the Mission District shall begin at the close of the Mission District Assembly at which they are elected.
 - 6) The Mission District Assembly may adopt an annual program budget for the Mission District. Major alterations from the budget recommended by the Mission District Council shall require approval of the Synod Council.
- e. There shall be a Mission District Council, which shall meet regularly to direct and coordinate the program of the Mission District.
- 1) The Mission District Council shall consist of the Dean, the secretary, representatives elected by the Mission District to the Synod Council, plus at least three other persons to be elected by the Mission District Assembly. They shall serve terms of three years, and shall serve no more than two terms consecutively.
 - 2) It shall be the responsibility of the Mission District Council, in consultation with the Synod staff person assigned to the Mission District, to coordinate the work of the Mission District, to identify areas of need and concern, to establish priorities for action, and to implement programs approved for action.
 - 3) The Mission District Council shall elect a layperson from among its membership to serve as chair. The chair shall serve a term of one year and may be reelected.
 - 4) The Mission District Council may elect a person to serve as treasurer. The treasurer shall serve a term of one year, and shall serve no more than six consecutive terms.
 - 5) If a vacancy occurs in the office of Dean, the Mission District Council, in consultation with the Bishop, shall elect an interim Dean to serve until the next regular or special Mission District Assembly.
 - 6) The Mission District Council may propose an annual program budget to the Mission District Assembly, after seeking and receiving from the Synod Council approval for the budget.
 - 7) The Mission District Council shall appoint a nominating committee, which shall present nominees to the Mission District Assembly.
 - 8) The Mission District Council may appoint such committees as it deems necessary to carry out the work of the Mission District.
 - 9) The Mission District Council shall report annually to the Synod Council and Synod Assembly on behalf of the Mission District.
 - 10) The secretary of each Mission District shall provide the Bishop, and other persons whom the Bishop may designate, with copies of all Mission District Assembly and Mission District Council minutes.
- f. The Mission District Council may authorize and oversee such clusters or coalitions of congregations as it deems helpful in carrying out the work of the Mission District.
- 1) Clusters or coalitions are groups of congregations reflecting close ties with each other because of geographic or socioeconomic considerations.
 - 2) The purpose of clusters or coalitions is to carry the work of the Mission District to the local community, to provide mutual support for congregations facing similar

challenges, and to bring to the attention of the Mission District unique needs in a local area.

- g. The Dean will serve as an advisor to the Bishop, and will assist in representing this Synod and the Mission District at important events in congregations and communities.
 - 1) The Dean shall preside at the meetings of the Mission District Assembly.
 - 2) The Dean will work in conjunction with the Synod staff person assigned to the Mission District. The Dean may be assigned further responsibilities by the Bishop of this Synod or by the Synod Council.
 - 3) The Dean will report annually to the Mission District Assembly.
- h. Mission Districts, through the Mission District Assembly, may adopt Bylaws that are not in conflict with the constitution or bylaws of this Synod and/or the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Bylaws adopted by the Mission District shall go into effect following approval by the Synod Council.
- i. Mission Districts may solicit funds from congregations on their territories only with the approval of the Synod Council.