

COASTAL CALIFORNIA LAESTADIAN LUTHERAN CHURCH

Submission of Proposed New Business for the 2026 LLC Annual Meeting

To: Laestadian Lutheran Church, Board of Directors and Annual Meeting Office
c/o Daniel Kumpula, Pastoral & Mission Program Manager
10911 Highway 55, Suite 203, Plymouth, MN 55441

From: Coastal California Congregation, by its appointed delegate, Briar Siljander

Date: June 19, 2026

Re: Proposed Items of New Business for Inclusion on the Agenda of the 2026 Annual Meeting

Via Email to: Arvin.pirness@llchurch.org, llcboard@llchurch.org, Daniel.kumpula@llchurch.org, and maria.fredrickson@llchurch.org

God's Peace.

Pursuant to Article II, Section 8 of the Bylaws of the Laestadian Lutheran Church ("LLC"), which provides that the order of business at the Annual Meeting shall include "New business," the Coastal California Congregation ("CCLLC"), by its appointed delegate, respectfully submits the following items for inclusion on the agenda of the 2026 Annual Meeting. CCLLC requests that each item below be placed before the Delegates for discussion and decision.

These items are offered in love and with the hope that God would reveal how so many within the LLC have been deceived by the devil and guided by that evil spirit to urge the separation of God's children from one another. These requests ask the delegates at the Annual Meeting to do one thing above all: to hold themselves and the LLC to the LLC's own Constitution, the highest earthly standard of which is the Holy Word of God.

Constitution Section V provides that the LLC "shall be composed of congregations ... who confess that living faith which is founded on the Holy Word of God," and declares that "the Holy Word of God is the highest authority and only measure according to which all doctrines and teachings in said Corporation are to be examined and judged."

Bylaws Article II, Section 1 requires member congregations to "act in conformity with the same spirit and doctrine confessed by the other member congregations ... as required in Sections V and VI of the Constitution." Bylaws Article II, Section 9 permits expulsion of a member congregation only where that congregation "does not comply or act in accordance with the Constitution and the Bylaws and fails to comply and obey the decisions made by the LLC."

At the 2022 Annual Meeting, the Delegates voted, by a show of hands, to expel the Minneapolis and Wolf Lake congregations. Both congregations had stated, repeatedly and in advance, their desire to remain members, and the Wolf Lake delegate asked that the matter be "judged by the Holy Word of

God, which is the highest and only authority.” No finding was ever stated that either congregation confessed a different faith or departed from any doctrine of the Constitution, and neither congregation was shown its claimed error from Scripture. The removals followed a dispute in Minneapolis regarding the sale of the church property and the holding of local confirmation schools in Wolf Lake — matters of practice and administration, not confessions of a contrary faith.

In place of the Constitution’s objective and stated standard – the Holy Word of God – the removals rested on an unwritten sense of shared “spirit” felt among the delegates of the remaining congregations. That substitutes the feelings of a majority for the measure the Constitution commands, and it is itself a departure from the Constitution. Luther warns of this, saying: **“Christ does not want to give you the right to run to and fro in search of the Spirit, to lose yourself in reverie and say: ‘I have this by inspiration of the Holy Spirit.’ Actually, it may be the devil who inspired you!”** *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 23: Sermons on the Gospel of St. John: Chapters 6-8, 173. If a congregation may be severed without any stated doctrinal error shown from God’s Word, then no congregation’s membership truly rests on the Constitution at all. It rests only on whether others presently feel unity with it, no matter if that unity has drifted from God’s firm foundation – His Word – or, indeed, has come by inspiration of the devil.

This is not a new concern raised for the first time at this meeting. I have put this very issue before the LLC in writing on two separate occasions: first in a letter addressed to the Board of Directors and the 2022 Annual Meeting Delegates, and again in a letter circulated to the member congregations and their boards, asking that these congregations be judged by the Holy Word of God in accordance with the Constitution. Not one member of the Board of Directors, and not one delegate or congregation chairman, responded, a troubling trend that is all too common. A standard that no one is willing to defend in writing, and a removal that no one is willing to explain when asked, cannot be the standard the Constitution requires.

Proposed Items of New Business

Item 1: Affirmation that removals must rest on the Constitution’s stated standard

Proposed motion: *That the Annual Meeting affirm that, under Constitution Section V and Bylaws Article II, Sections 1 and 9, no member congregation may be expelled unless the LLC first states the specific doctrine of the Constitution from which the congregation is alleged to depart, and shows that departure from the Holy Word of God; and that the Annual Meeting acknowledge that the 2022 removals of the Minneapolis and Wolf Lake congregations were carried out without meeting this standard.*

Rationale: Expulsion under Section 9 is available only for failure to act “in accordance with the Constitution and the Bylaws.” The Constitution’s measure is the Holy Word of God (Section V). A removal that identifies no doctrinal departure and shows no Scriptural error does not satisfy Section 9; it bypasses the Constitution rather than enforcing it.

Item 2: Requirement of a written, Scriptural basis before any expulsion

Proposed motion: *That the Annual Meeting adopt, as the settled practice of the LLC, consistent with its Constitution and bylaws, that before any vote to expel a member congregation, the Board of Directors shall provide to*

that congregation and to all Delegates a written statement (a) identifying the specific doctrine of the Constitution at issue, (b) setting forth the passages of the Holy Word of God said to be violated, and (c) describing the efforts made to show the congregation its error and to restore it; and that the affected congregation be given a reasonable opportunity to respond in writing and in person before any vote is taken.

Rationale: This item puts into practice what the Constitution already requires. A written, Scripture-based statement protects every congregation equally, guards against decisions driven by contention, sentiment, or political factions, and ensures that “all doctrines and teachings” are in fact “examined and judged” by the Holy Word of God, as Section V commands.

Item 3: Reinstatement of the Minneapolis and Wolf Lake congregations

Proposed motion: *That, because no doctrinal error was ever stated or shown from the Holy Word of God to justify their removal, the Annual Meeting rescind the 2022 expulsions of the Minneapolis and Wolf Lake congregations and restore them to membership.*

Rationale: If the 2022 removals did not meet the Constitution’s standard (and no stated doctrinal error shown from Scripture has ever been offered), then the just course is acknowledge those errors, to restore the congregations, and to address any genuine doctrinal concern in the manner the Constitution requires. Ironically, nearly every cited “cause of confusion” iterated in the time leading up to the expulsion has since been taught or embraced by the LLC and its congregations, while others were acknowledged to be wrong, “corrected,” and then re-asserted. For example:

- The LLC’s own circulated teaching (Valde Palola, “The Bible is God’s Revelation,” Siionin Lähetyslehti 7/2012) states that “in Lutheran tradition, the idea of continual revelation is unknown,” and warns that treating revelation as “continuing in the midst of the congregation” apart from Scripture “lowers ... the authority of the Bible.” Yet the removals were defended on the ground that the decision of the assembled delegates was itself a “decision of the Holy Spirit” — locating revelation in the gathering rather than in the Word, the very error that teaching condemns.
- Statements that “the Bible is not the highest authority — the congregation is equal to it,” that “the congregation is the mouth of God,” “the congregation is God,” and “the congregation is unerring,” were acknowledged to be erroneous and “corrected,” yet have continued to surface and be defended.
- Doctrines such as “continual forgiveness,” justification, the righteousness of faith, and the doctrine of the congregation were, by the meeting participants’ own account, still under active discussion at the very time the removals occurred, confirming that no fixed, agreed doctrine had been identified from which Minneapolis or Wolf Lake had departed. Indeed, even now congregation boards and ministers embrace the term “continual forgiveness (e.g., the Phoenix board stating in its minutes that “Our sins are continuously forgiven thru [sic] Jesus’ redemption work” and referencing “[t]his continuous forgiveness”; the same ministers judging and condemning the Minneapolis and Wolf Lake congregations for mentioning “continual forgiveness” now freely preach that sins are “continually forgiven”).

* * * * *

We fear that the faith of many has been placed in an organization and in the words of sinful men rather than in Christ, who is above all. Scripture warns, “Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm” (Jeremiah 17:5), and “It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man” (Psalm 118:8). “For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 3:11), and it is Christ alone who is before all things, that “in all things he might have the preeminence” (Colossians 1:18). We raise this not to judge any person’s heart — for the judgment of faith belongs to God alone — but to plead that this body return its trust to Christ and to His Word above every man, board, and institution, this one included.

CCLLC respectfully requests that each of the three items above be added to the agenda of the 2026 Annual Meeting under “New business,” and that this submission be distributed to the Board of Directors and the Delegates in advance of the meeting. CCLLC’s delegate intends to attend, present, and discuss these items. We make this submission with the prayer that these serious errors could be addressed, acknowledged, and resolved, and most importantly that God’s truth could shine through the cloud of deceit and confusion so that all can fix their gaze on Jesus Christ, our Savior, just as the LLC Constitution directs. Through faith alone, by grace alone, God’s children are saved.

“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just ... think on these things.” (Phil. 4:8)

God’s Peace,

Briar Siljander

Delegate, Coastal California Congregation