

Memorials and Resolutions Explained

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America provides three primary avenues for communication from synods to the churchwide organization and the Churchwide Assembly, using two vehicles, memorials and resolutions. The three avenues are:

- 1) Synod Assemblies may address the Churchwide Assembly through memorials;
- 2) Synod Councils may address the ELCA Church Council through resolutions, and;
- 3) Synod Councils may address churchwide units or offices through the ELCA Church Council's Executive Committee (including forwarding resolutions adopted by Synod Assemblies).

Memorials address broad policy issues and are passed by synod assemblies for consideration by the Churchwide Assembly. Only a Synod Assembly may address a memorial to the Churchwide Assembly. Synod councils are not authorized to adopt memorials. Once received by the churchwide organization, memorials are referred to the Memorials Committee, which is appointed by the Church Council to review and make recommendations to the Churchwide Assembly, in accordance with bylaw **12.51.02**. (CBCR). The Memorials Committee meets in the year of a churchwide assembly after all synod assemblies are over.

Resolutions are requests from synods to the Church Council or units or offices of the churchwide organization. Either synod assemblies or synod councils may originate resolutions. As a practical matter, resolutions have a narrower focus than memorials because they are requests for consideration or action by the Church Council or by individual units or offices of the churchwide organization by way of the Church Council Executive Committee. Thus, for example, a request for the Church Council to recommend a parliamentary rule or some action by a unit of the churchwide organization would be the subject of a resolution, but a request to change an ELCA policy should be a memorial. Frequently, synod councils will pass resolutions between meetings of their Synod Assembly and forward them to the Church Council for consideration, or to the Church Council Executive Committee if the desired action involves referral to a unit or office of the churchwide organization.

Resolutions calling for synod action are also in order at the Synod Assembly. These generally will address policy concerns, where the entity presenting the resolution is asking for a particular policy or action by the synod.

Overview

The Greater Milwaukee Synod Council will recommend to the Synod Assembly the following Rules and Procedures for 2021. These will be formalized by the Assembly at the Plenary Session of the Assembly, on Saturday, May 1st, 2021 but will be followed prior to that action.

The Synod Council may approve, upon the recommendation of the bishop, that a meeting of the Synod Assembly take place by means of an online meeting platform (such as Zoom webinar). This platform must allow that all participants who are entitled to voice and vote can communicate with others in the meeting, in accordance with the synod's governing documents and Illinois State Statutes.

I. Memorials and Resolutions

- A. Deadlines for submission of memorials and resolutions:
 - Monday, March 15, 2021 by congregations, committees, or conferences.
 - Thursday, March 18, 2021 for Synod Council initiated resolutions.
- B. Memorials and resolutions may only be submitted by vote of a conference, a committee of the synod, or a congregation (by council or congregational vote), or by action of the Synod Council.

- C. Memorials and resolutions that conflict with the governing documents of the ELCA are “improper motions” and will not be considered.
- D. The memorials and resolutions that meet these criteria are included in the Pre-Assembly materials. Anyone seeking to have additional memorials or resolutions considered may only do so by moving a suspension of the rules for the purpose of considering that memorial or resolution. Such a motion requires a two-thirds vote to carry.
- E. By synod council action (SC98.05.02), memorials or resolutions, when called onto the agenda, must be moved by a member of the Assembly acting as a sponsor, who would then be the first individual to speak in favor of the memorial or resolution after its reading by the chair of the Reference and Counsel Committee.
- F. All resolutions submitted by the deadline will be reviewed for editing, clarity and consistency prior to submission to the Reference & Counsel Committee. Those submitting resolutions should avoid, if at all possible, the use of footnotes or links to the internet, which may be removed at the discretion of the Reference & Counsel Committee. Entities submitting resolutions calling for synod action should be aware that, given limited resources, some detailed plans for action may not be feasible, and may not be supported by the Reference & Counsel Committee. Resolutions that would have the effect of increasing budgetary items without recommending corresponding decreases in other budgetary items will be ruled “out of order,” consistent with Rule VII below.
- G. A voting member wishing to present an amendment or substitute motion shall present the exact wording in writing to the designated person prior to moving the amendment.
- H. Resolutions not addressed by the Synod Assembly shall be forwarded to the Synod Council.

II. Registration

- A. The synod council shall also establish a registration deadline in advance of the meeting, providing sufficient time for meeting information and voting registration credentials to be distributed.
- B. **Registration for the 2021 Synod Assembly shall close at 12:00 noon, on Monday, April 26. No registrations will be received after the deadline has passed. Due to the limitations of the meeting host software and voting credentials, no walk-in registrations will be accepted.**
- C. Those individuals who are neither Voting nor Advisory Members of the Synod Assembly will be directed to watch the Assembly via livestream through the Synod Facebook page.

III. Agenda

- A. The business of the assembly shall be conducted during plenary sessions held on 1 May 2021. The chair shall have authority to call items of business before the assembly in whatever order is most expedient for conducting assembly business. Resolutions or other business not addressed by the Synod Assembly shall be forwarded to the synod council.
- B. The agenda shall be presented and adopted at the beginning of the first plenary session. If any voting member desires to add any item of new business to the agenda after the initial adoption of the agenda by the assembly, the voting member shall present such item of business to the chair. A two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting shall be required to add the item of new business to the agenda.

IV. Quorum

Fifty percent (50%) of voting members who have confirmed registration upon the beginning of the assembly shall constitute a quorum as required by constitution (S7.14.).

V. Floor Procedures and Online Meeting Rules

- A. Registered voting members and advisory members shall have equal privilege of addressing the assembly. Advisory members will have voice but no vote on matters before the assembly. They shall include: lay members of committees, leadership teams, task forces and work groups; lay members of synod assembly committees; lay members of the synod staff; representatives of synod partners in ministry; and representatives from ELCA synodical, and churchwide offices.
- B. Voting or advisory members with a procedural question or issue may seek to be recognized using the chat function of the meeting platform. A moderator of chat function will alert the chair.
- C. The chair will regularly check on those joining by phone to ascertain if they wish to speak to an issue.
- D. When an item of business is opened by the chair for discussion, those voting or advisory members wishing to speak shall indicate their preference to do so in the chat function of the meeting platform. When indicating their preference to speak, voting or advisory members must specify if they are speaking for or against the item under consideration. Moderators will keep a speakers list and provide it to the chair.
- E. Once recognized by the chair, each speaker will state his or her name, preferred pronouns and congregational membership. No person may speak more than once on an item of business until all others who wish to speak have had opportunity to do so.
- F. Speeches from the floor during debate shall be limited to three (3) minutes. Those whose primary language is not English may exceed the limit for translation purposes with the discretion of the chair. In the event of anticipated prolonged debate, the chair may declare (or an assembly move as a matter of procedure) that speeches will be made in alternating order between supporting and opposing views. This is consistent with the 2019 Churchwide Assembly Rules of Organization and Procedure, which state in part: *"Insofar as is possible during discussion, a speaker on one side of the question shall be followed by a speaker on the other side."*
- G. To facilitate alternating speeches, and when requested by the chair, Assembly members shall note in the chat feature whether they are speaking in favor of the motion or against the motion, or if they have a question of clarification or a point of order.
- H. The chair will rotate speaking privileges between proponents and opponents of a measure, which will be indicated in the chat function of the meeting platform and noted by a moderator. Debate will terminate when three speakers have been heard on each side, unless otherwise determined by a majority vote of the voting members present and voting of the assembly.
- I. If a voting member recognized by the chair desires to make a motion, the motion is to be made first, before the voting member speaks to it. Once a motion is made, if there is a second, which can be made via the chat, the voting member may then speak in support of the motion made.

- J. The chair may recognize an individual(s) to provide pertinent background information regarding a resolution. Such speakers shall be limited to four (4) minutes.
- K. Following the reading of the resolution or the introduction of the item of business, discussion on any item of business shall be limited to thirty (30) minutes. This rule may be suspended by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting.
- L. All motions amending a memorial or resolution must be presented to the chair of the Assembly in writing, preferably in advance of making the motion or, if that is not possible, immediately after making the motion.

VI. Voting

- A. Voting, except for contested elections, may, at the discretion of the chair, be conducted by raised hand function, a polling feature on the meeting platform, an electronic voting application, or by a division of the house upon request. In determining the outcome of a vote, only the yes and no votes shall be counted in determining the total number of votes required for adoption. Abstentions may be recorded, but do not count in the vote total. Proxy and absentee voting shall not be permitted in the transaction of any business of the Synod Assembly. The Chair will allow for at least one (1) minute for voting to occur.
- B. In the case of contested elections or motions, voting shall take place by means of a secure voting platform that ensures all voting members are able to vote. Provisions will be made to allow voting members who do not have access to computer technology to register their vote by telephone. The Chair will allow for up to five (5) minutes of voting to occur.
- C. No division of the house is in order when a vote has been taken by written or electronic ballot.
- D. All voting members shall confirm registration by 12 noon on Monday, April 26, 2021. No voting member shall be able to vote unless duly registered with the credentials committee.

VII. Elections

- A. Nominees for the offices to be filled by Assembly action are listed in the Pre-Assembly materials. **I. Nominations from the floor for non-conference elections will be accepted by the nominating committee until 10:00 p.m. on Friday, April 30th, 2021.** Anyone wishing to place a name in nomination must:
 - 1. Have the nominee's consent to run and serve if elected, and
 - 2. Submit to the Assembly office the required biographical data at the time of nomination.
- B. Elections shall be by electronic voting application. Unless otherwise stated, all elections must be by a majority of the legal votes cast. In the event that no majority is attained on the first ballot, the names of the two candidates receiving the highest number of votes shall be listed on the second ballot. In the case of groupings of nominees, twice the number of candidates to be elected shall advance to the next ballot. The first ballot will be taken as close to the First Plenary Session as feasible. A second ballot shall be taken, if necessary.

VIII. Privilege of Voice

Guests, other than voting members, may be accorded the privilege of voice by a majority vote. Voice shall also be granted to those persons designated by the Synod Council, as provided for in S7.23. of the Synod's Constitution.

IX. Distribution of Materials

No materials may be distributed to the Synod Assembly without the advanced approval of the bishop or the Reference and Counsel Committee of the Assembly.

X. Changing Synod Budget Amounts on Assembly Floor

- A. Any proposal increasing any line item in the proposed 2022-2023 Budget shall indicate from which line or lines an equal amount is to be subtracted.
- B. For an amendment to the synod budget to be considered by the Assembly, the amendment to the synod budget must result in the total final income and expense amounts being exactly the same as proposed by the Synod Council for adoption by the assembly.

XI. Additional Rules

- A. A motion to adjourn shall be debatable.
- B. The chair, at any time, may declare a recess of the assembly for purposes of addressing technical issues.
- C. All matters not governed by rules of this assembly or by specific assembly action shall be governed by Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, in its most current edition.