

Assembly Procedures

The following courtesies and adherence to good parliamentary procedures in obtaining the floor will be appreciated.

- A. Go to the microphone.
- B. Address the Chair.
- C. Identify yourself by: (1) name, (2) congregation, and (3) town or city.
- D. Speak slowly, loudly, clearly.

The right to speak on the assembly floor...

1. Lay voting members elected by congregations and authorized worshiping communities of the synod and accredited to the Assembly by their proper registration with the Credentials Committee.
2. All pastors and deacons under call on the roster of this synod.
3. Persons on the roster of this synod who are retired or on leave from call (who are not otherwise a voting member of the Assembly).
4. Executives of ministry institutions or agencies that serve in partnership with the Southwestern Minnesota Synod.
5. Lay members of the Synod Council, Conference Chairpersons, and Synod Boards.
6. Officers of the ELCA, executives of the various units, offices and commissions of the ELCA, synod members serving on Churchwide boards and committees, and synod members serving boards of institutions and agencies that serve in partnership with the synod.
7. Youth representatives who are registered at the Assembly.
8. Pastors of other denominations who are serving congregations of the Southwestern Minnesota Synod.

Rules governing debate of resolutions...

1. Once a resolution has been introduced the principal author of the resolution shall have the privilege to speak first during debate. This speech shall be limited to four (4) minutes.
2. All subsequent speeches on each resolution shall be limited to three (3) minutes each.
3. Those who have spoken once to a resolution shall not speak again to the same resolution until all others have had the opportunity to speak once, except when invited by the chair to respond to questions of clarification. Second speeches shall be limited to one (1) minute each.
4. Calling of the question – Those persons wishing to call the question must come to a microphone and join the speakers waiting to be recognized by the chair. They will be called on in order, and calling of the question may not interrupt a speaker. For further clarification, see Robert's Rules of Order.

The right to vote...

1. Voting members elected by congregations and authorized worshiping communities of the synod who have been accredited to the Assembly by proper registration with the Credentials Committee.
2. All pastors and deacons under call on the roster of this synod.
3. Retired deacons on the roster of this synod elected by their congregation members.
4. Retired pastors on the roster of the synod serving in interim ministries in congregations of the synod during the time of the Synod Assembly.
5. An ordained minister from a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by the Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA serving in a congregation during the time of the Synod Assembly.
6. Lay members of the Synod Council, including officers and Conference Chairpersons who are properly registered with the Credentials Committee.

Point of Order...

Any member may submit a point of order or procedure to the chair and may, if necessary, interrupt a speaker for that purpose.

Withdrawal of a Motion...

Any motion or amendment may be withdrawn by permission of the Assembly.

Supplementary Rules...

By decision of the Synod Council, the following regulations will be observed with regard to resolutions: Only Assembly resolutions received by the Synod Assembly Resolutions Committee and at the synod office at least 120 days prior to the Synod Assembly will be considered at the Assembly with the exception of the following:

- A. Resolutions coming from conference assemblies must be at the synod office and in the hands of the Synod Assembly Resolutions Committee chairperson no later than four (4) days following the conference assembly and at least 60 days prior to the Synod Assembly.
- B. Resolutions that are the direct result of the assembly's response to items that are listed on the assembly agenda.
- C. Resolutions that address issues of such an immediate and urgent nature that they clearly cannot be postponed until the next Assembly.

Authority is granted to the Synod Assembly Resolutions Committee to determine whether a given resolution qualifies for assembly consideration according to the provision outlined above, and a two-thirds (2/3) majority assembly vote shall be required to override the decision of the Synod Assembly Resolutions Committee.

A background statement, not to exceed one page, and outlining both pro and con arguments relative to the resolution should be provided by every individual or group that presents a resolution for Assembly action. This background statement should be separate from the resolution itself.

The Synod Assembly Resolutions Committee will receive all submitted resolutions and prepare them for consideration by the Assembly. In this preparation, the committee's goal shall be to assist the assembly in focusing on significant matters, having helpful and efficient discussion, and taking appropriate action. In pursuit of these goals, the committee will strive to respect the intent of those who submitted the resolution to the assembly.

Committee work on resolutions may include, but is not limited to the following: editing for accuracy, clarity, brevity and internal consistency and for appropriate form and process; editing for fidelity to the synod's governing documents, including its Statement of Faith; abbreviation; editing and supplementing of background information including reference to prior assembly actions. The committee may choose to consult the author and/or submitters of a resolution concerning an edit, but the committee itself has final authority to alter a resolution.

In addition, the Resolutions Committee may also ask authors and/or submitters to combine two or more resolutions with similar foci in order to enhance clarity of the authors' voice and/or the submitters' intent, and preserve helpful and efficient discussion on the assembly floor while reducing redundancy.

For resolutions submitted with background information, such history must be concise and support a clear solution to a concern or problem. Background information should not be only a repetition of a given problem. Authors and submitters of resolutions should ensure that roughly 40 percent of their resolution (including background information) should deal with the details of the particular problem, while about 60 percent should address a solution. Preference will be given to resolutions which call for a specific solution to a problem or concern.

For each resolution, the committee may recommend a particular action to the assembly and, if it does so, shall give a rationale for its recommendation. Recommendations will normally be given only for reasons related to process and not for reasons related to content. In exceptional circumstances the committee may make a recommendation related to the content of the resolution. When it does so, the background information must include a numerical record of the committee's vote on the recommendation.

No resolutions will be accepted at the assembly except those growing out of assembly business or of such an urgent nature that they obviously cannot be postponed until the next Assembly. Such resolutions will be allowed until 12:00 noon on the next-to-the-last day of the assembly.

The order that resolutions will be brought to the floor will be determined by the presiding officer based on the urgency of the resolution and the time available for debate.

Budget clarification procedure:

S10.04 Any proposal to appropriate funds, whether by amendment to the budget or otherwise, which is presented to a meeting of the Synod Assembly without the approval of the Synod Council, shall require a two-thirds vote for adoption.