# Resolution 19.01
## Regarding the Process for Synod Bishop Elections

**Whereas,** The synod bishop election process used in the Southwestern Minnesota Synod in the past has prompted review and modification to strengthen it and invite even broader participation; and

**Whereas,** The bishop election processes of several synods, as detailed in their synod constitutions, were researched by a Bishop Election Task Force appointed by our Synod Council, and the Task Force developed new bylaw and continuing resolution language to allow for the incorporation of an ecclesiastical ballot for the election of a synod bishop in the Southwestern Minnesota Synod; therefore, be it

**Resolved,** That the Synod Council of the Southwestern Minnesota Synod recommends the adoption of the proposed changes to Chapter S9.04. of the Southwestern Minnesota Synod Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions as follows.

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**SUMMARY OF CHANGES**

This resolution changes and expands the process for pre-identification of names prior to the Synod Assembly. The process for identifying people may begin at congregational annual meetings. At each of the Conference Assemblies, up to five names may be identified. Individuals may self-identify, and individuals may also be identified by others. This resolution removes the requirement for all Conference Assemblies to meet on the same day and at the same time for identification/nomination purposes in years when a bishop election is to occur. There will no longer be public forums prior to the start of the synod assembly.

The names of people are described as "identified" until the conclusion of the first (nominating/ecclesiastical) ballot. After the first ballot, those continuing in the election process will be referred to as "nominees."

Those who have been pre-identified prior to Synod Assembly still need at least one vote on the first ballot in order to be nominated.

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Sections in regular type are bylaws.
Sections in *italic type are continuing resolutions*.
Language to be removed is ~~struck through~~.
Language to be added is <u>underlined</u>.

**Chapter 9. NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS**

**S9.04. The bishop shall be elected by the Synod Assembly in accordance with the process specified in the bylaws and continuing resolutions.**

S9.04.01. ~~For purposes of the bylaws under S9.04 of the Constitution, the term nominee shall be synonymous with candidate. The Synod Nominating Committee shall prepare a slate of nominees for synod bishop for consideration by the conference assemblies. When preparing a slate of nominees for synod bishop, the Synod Nominating Committee shall solicit~~

recommendations for nominees from individuals and congregations throughout the Synod, which nominees may come from within or without the Synod. The Synod Nominating Committee shall prepare a nomination information form and request that it be completed by each individual recommended as a nominee for bishop. The completed information forms will be made available to each conference assembly voting member who will be voting on the nominees at least two weeks prior to the first conference assembly preceding the Synod Assembly at which the election of the bishop is to occur. Each conference assembly shall then nominate five (5) members of the ELCA ministers of Word and Sacrament roster for the office of synod bishop. Prior to placement on the conference's nominating ballot, each nominee must first be nominated by a voting member in that conference in order for the individual's name to be placed on the conference ballot. The nominees on the conference nominating ballot may consist of nominees other than those named in the Synod Nominating Committee slate, and need not come from within a particular conference. The names of the nominees selected by the conference nominating ballots shall be forwarded to the Synod Nominating Committee.

The bishop shall be elected by the Synod Assembly by ecclesiastical ballot. Three-fourths of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election on the first ballot. If no election results, the first ballot shall be considered the nominating ballot. Three-fourths of the legal votes cast on the second ballot shall be necessary for election. The third ballot shall be limited to the seven persons (plus ties) who receive the greatest number of legal votes on the second ballot, and two-thirds of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. The fourth ballot shall be limited to the three persons (plus ties) who receive the greatest number of legal votes on the third ballot, and 60 percent of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. On subsequent ballots a majority of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. These ballots shall be limited to the two persons (plus ties) who receive the greatest number of legal votes on the previous ballot.

*S9.04.01.A2013. Each conference shall, on the first nominating ballot, allow voting members to vote for five (5) nominees. Any nominees who receive a majority of the votes cast on this ballot shall be considered nominees of the conference and their names will not reappear on subsequent ballots. On subsequent ballots, the number of nominees to be voted for on the ballot, if there is a sufficient number of nominees remaining on the ballots to be voted for, shall be equal to the number of remaining nominee positions. (For example, if two nominees achieve majority votes on the first ballot, voting members shall vote for three nominees on the second ballot.) This process shall continue until five nominees are chosen.*
*S9.04.01.A2013. 1. On subsequent ballots, the list of nominees shall be limited to nominees whose names appeared on the first ballot. On any ballot on which no nominee receives a majority, the nominee with the fewest votes is removed.*
*2. In balloting for bishop nominees, the following persons shall be eligible to vote: all rostered leaders of that conference of the Southwestern Minnesota Synod; and up to six lay persons from each congregation of the conference. Congregations are encouraged but not required to elect an equal number of male and female voting members.*

S9.04.02. The Synod Nominating Committee shall formulate a slate of five (5) nominees by determining the persons most frequently nominated at the conference assemblies. In the event of a tie for the fifth place, all fifth place nominees shall be included among the slate of nominees. In the event of the withdrawal by a nominee thirty days prior to the opening of the Synod Assembly, leaving fewer than five nominees, the Synod Nominating Committee shall place the name of the next succeeding nominee(s) on the ballot, if any.

There shall be a pre-identification process. ~~The goal of this process is to surface names of potential nominees and provide information on these individuals to the people of the synod prior to the synod assembly.~~ The components and timetable for this identification process include the following:

 a. The Synod Council shall appoint a Bishop Election Committee no later than October 1 the preceding year of a synod bishop election year.
 b. The identification process begins no later than November 15 with an invitation sent to all congregations and rostered leaders of the Southwestern Minnesota Synod outlining the process to identify potential candidates for Synod Bishop.
 c. Congregations will have the opportunity to IDENTIFY to the Bishop Election Committee by February 15 one individual who shall be a member of the Word and Sacrament roster and be in good standing.

*S9.04.02.A2019. Conferences, at their Conference Assemblies, will have the opportunity to IDENTIFY to the Bishop Election Committee by March 15 up to five individuals who shall be members of the Word and Sacrament roster and be in good standing. In the identification process, the following persons shall be eligible to vote: all rostered leaders of that conference of the Southwestern Minnesota Synod, and up to six laypersons from each congregation of the conference. Congregations are encouraged but not required to elect an equal number of male and female voting members.*
*Members of the Word and Sacrament roster who are in good standing and discern a call to the office of Bishop may SELF-IDENTIFY their interest and submit their own name to the Bishop Election Committee no later than February 15.*
*Individuals who are members of a congregation of the Synod will have the opportunity to IDENTIFY to the Bishop Election Committee by February 15 one individual who shall be a member of the Word and Sacrament roster and be in good standing.*

S9.04.03. ~~The Synod Nominating Committee shall make arrangements for nominee forums and/or other opportunities in the synod for the purpose of acquainting members of the synod with the nominees and encouraging discussion of matters related to the election of the bishop. The Synod Nominating Committee shall cause the slate of nominees, along with their biographical information, to be published in the official publications of the synod and in the pre-assembly report for the Synod Assembly. The Synod Council shall arrange for the funding of such forums and for participation of nominees in the forums and Synod Assembly. The Synod Council shall arrange for the funding of such forums and for participation of nominees in the forums and Synod Assembly.~~

 a. No later than March 25 prior to the Synod Assembly, the Bishop Election Committee will contact all persons identified for the office of Bishop, providing them with biographical information forms to be filled out and returned to the Bishop Election Committee, if they are interested in the call to the office of Bishop.
 b. No later than April 5 prior to the Synod Assembly, all completed biographical information forms will be due from identified persons.
 c. No fewer than 30 days prior to the Synod Assembly, the Bishop Election Committee will announce names of identified persons and share biographical information with the synod until the first day of the Synod Assembly.
 d. The Synod's Bishop Election Committee shall cause the list of those who have been identified, along with their biographical information, to be published in the official publications of the synod and in the pre-assembly report for the Synod Assembly.

*S9.04.03.A2014. At the Synod Assembly, there shall be no nominations from the floor for the office of bishop. Statements by the nominees may be permitted according to rules adopted by the Synod Assembly. Where five or more nominees are on the first ballot, three-fourths of the votes cast shall be necessary for election on the first ballot. If no election results, the nominee receiving the fewest votes shall be removed from the slate of nominees. On the second ballot, two-thirds of the votes cast shall be necessary to elect. If no election results, the nominee with the fewest votes shall be removed from the slate of nominees. On all remaining ballots, until election, a majority of votes cast shall elect. If no election results on a given ballot, the nominee with the fewest votes shall be removed from the slate of nominees. Where four nominees, and only four nominees are on the first ballot, two-thirds of the votes cast shall be necessary to elect on the first ballot, and a majority of votes cast to elect on each succeeding ballot. Where three nominees or fewer are on the first ballot, a majority of votes cast shall be necessary to elect on the first ballot. Regardless of the number of nominees on the initial ballot and each succeeding ballot, if no election results, the nominee receiving the fewest votes cast shall be removed from the slate of nominees prior to the next ballot.*

S9.04.04.
    a. On the first ballot at the Synod Assembly, each voting member may write the name of one person who is eligible to serve as Synod Bishop.
    b. Any nominees who have not submitted biographical information must do so prior to the second ballot.
    c. After each ballot the names remaining shall have biographical information available to the synod.

*S9.04.04.A2019. After the second ballot is cast, nominees' names may no longer be removed from the balloting process.*

*Submitted by Southwestern Minnesota Synod Council*

*Reviewed by Resolutions Committee - April 30, 2019*