

# Rules of Procedure.



## I. AGENDA.

- a. The agenda and rules of procedure shall be presented and adopted at the beginning of the first plenary session of the Synod Assembly. Once adopted, neither document may be amended except by a two-third majority vote of the Assembly. Any additions to the agenda, after adoption by the Assembly, shall require a two-third vote to add the new item of business to the agenda.

## II. QUORUM.

- a. One-third of the members of the Synod Assembly shall constitute a quorum. (S7:14).

## III. VOTING.

- a. All balloting shall be by secure voting procedures as arranged for this assembly. Balloting shall be done via a designated electronic application, unless otherwise directed by the chair. Each member shall bring their own personal device in order to vote. Designated voting cards, or other means of voting, may be used if directed to do so by the chair. There shall be no absentee or proxy voting.

## IV. VOTING PRIVILEGES.

- a. Lay voting members elected by congregations and authorized worshipping communities of the synod, who have been accredited to the Assembly by proper registration with the Credentials Committee.
- b. All rostered ministers who have been accredited to the Assembly by proper registration with the Credentials Committee.
- c. Lay members of Synod Council, including officers and Conference Chairpersons, who are properly registered with the Credentials Committee.
- d. A rostered 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.

## V. PLENARY FLOOR RULES.

- a. After being recognized by the chair, each speaker shall first state their name and congregation membership. No voting member shall speak more than once to the same motion until all members desiring to speak have an opportunity to do so.
- b. Except when making a motion, each speaker shall be limited to two (2) minutes. Time shall be monitored by a member of the Resolutions Committee or another individual designated for this purpose. The chair shall alternate recognition between speakers in favor of the measure (indicated by a green card) and those opposed (indicated by a red card). A white card shall signify a point of order or a request for clarification. Debate on the measure shall conclude upon a majority vote of the assembly to end debate.
- c. When a voting member has been recognized by the chair and wishes to make a motion, the member shall first state the motion. Upon the motion being duly made, and if seconded, the member who made the motion may then proceed to speak in its favor.
- d. The chair may recognize an individual or individuals to provide relevant background information pertaining to a resolution. Such remarks shall be limited to three (3) minutes per speaker.
- e. Online voting members shall submit their intention to speak via the “chat” feature in Zoom. The Zoom moderator will invite the speaker to the Zoom “waiting room” and give further instructions. When recognized by the chair, the speaker will be brought forward via Zoom on screen and shall identify themselves and their congregation membership prior to a motion being duly made.
- f. The chair may recognize an individual or individuals to provide relevant background information pertaining to a resolution. Such remarks shall be limited to three (3) minutes per speaker.

## VI. GENERAL RULES.

- a. The Assembly chairperson (presiding officer) is the bishop of this synod.
- b. The Assembly presiding officer shall have the authority to call items of business before the Assembly in whatever order considered to be most expedient for the conduct of the Assembly’s business.
- c. No printed materials of any kind may be distributed or posted within the assembly hall except by the Synod Assembly Planning Team, and only following authorization granted by the assembly manager.
- d. The chair, at any time, may declare a recess of the assembly for purposes of addressing technical issues.
- e. Seating on the plenary floor of the assembly shall be designated for voting members and advisors properly registered with the credentials committee. Visitors to the assembly shall be seated in a preassigned designated area.

- f. Cell phones, laptops, and other wireless devices must be on silent mode in the Assembly hall. Calls are not allowed in the Assembly hall.
- g. A motion to adjourn is debatable.
- h. Robert's Rules of Order, latest edition, shall govern parliamentary procedure of the Synod Assembly.

## VII. NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS.

- a. In all elections by the Synod Assembly, other than for the bishop, a majority of legal votes cast shall be necessary for election.
- b. Additional nominations by voting members of the assembly shall be made at the time of the Nominating Committee Report. Complete candidate information, along with consent, for each nominee shall be presented in writing to the Secretary, or chair, on forms provided by the Nominating Committee upon request.
- c. No additional nominations shall be accepted after approval of the Nominating Committee report.
- d. The Synod Vice President, or designee, will cast a unanimous ballot for all synod positions where there is only one name on the ballot.

## VIII. BUDGET.

- a. 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. (S10-04.)

## IX. RESOLUTIONS.

- a. The following regulations will be observed with regard to resolutions: Only resolutions received by the Synod Assembly Resolutions Committee and at the Synod office at least 60 days prior to the Synod Assembly will be considered at the Synod Assembly. Authority is granted to the Synod Assembly Resolutions Committee to determine whether a given resolution qualifies for assembly consideration.
- b. 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.
- c. 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.
- d. 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 or to determine whether a given resolution qualifies for assembly consideration according to the provisions listed below:
  1. Was the proposed memorial or resolution timely? (i.e. was it submitted before the deadline?)
  2. Is the proposed memorial or resolution consistent with the governing documents of this church?
  3. Is the proposed memorial or resolution germane to issues on the agenda?
  4. Does the proposed memorial or resolution address a priority, ministry, or concern of this synod and this church?
  5. Is this proposed memorial or resolution clearly drafted?
  6. Do the "resolved" clauses clearly define the proposed course of action?
  7. Do the "whereas" clauses explain the proposed action and are they accurate and non-argumentative?
  8. Does the proposed memorial or resolution have budgetary or human resource implications, and, if so, how will they be addressed?
  9. Are the proposed actions feasible and appropriate for the Synod Assembly, Church Council, Churchwide Assembly, or the churchwide unit or office that will be addressed?
  10. Are there other memorials or resolutions that address the same or similar issues?
- e. 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.
- f. 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.

- g. The Resolutions Committee shall report its recommendations on memorials, resolutions, and main motions to the Synod Assembly. Such recommendations do not require a second. When the Resolutions Committee recommends approval, the committee's recommendation shall be the main motion before the assembly. When the Resolutions Committee recommends the adoption of a substitute or alternative motion, the committee's recommendation shall be the main motion before the assembly. When the Resolutions Committee recommends referral, the committee's recommendation shall become the main motion before the assembly. When the Resolutions Committee recommends that the assembly decline a proposed memorial, resolution, or main motion, the recommendation shall be reported to the assembly. If the author or another voting member wishes to bring the declined proposed memorial, resolution, or main motion to the floor, he or she may move the matter, and it shall become the main motion before the assembly, and the committee's recommendation shall be received for information.
- h. 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 first day of the assembly.
- i. As Assembly resolutions are introduced for consideration and debate, the Synod Secretary, or designee, will eliminate the reading of the "whereas" clauses and read only the "be it resolved" clause of the resolution.
- j. 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.

