Southwestern Minnesota Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

OVERVIEW OF THE SW MN SYNOD BISHOP ELECTION PROCESS

This synod's process for electing a bishop is formally defined in Chapter 9 of the Synod Constitution on Nominations and Elections, section S9.04. The Southwestern Minnesota Synod will use an ecclesiastical ballot. A process to pre-identify nominees will take place through congregations, conference assemblies, and self-identification. The Bishop Election Committee is responsible for planning and implementing the process up to the balloting at the synod assembly. The process can be described in three main stages.

FIRST STAGE: IDENTIFYING POTENTIAL NOMINEES

I. **BY NOVEMBER 15, 2026:**
Congregations and rostered ministers of the synod will receive an invitation explaining the process and how to submit names using the Bishop Election Committee's forms.

II. **BY END OF DAY FEBRUARY 15, 2027**
Deadline for congregations, individual congregation members, and pastors identifying themselves to submit names.

III. **BY END OF DAY MARCH 15, 2027**
Each conference assembly may identify up to five ELCA Ministers of Word and Sacrament.

SECOND STAGE: CONFIRMING PARTICIPATION & SHARING INFORMATION

IV. **BY MARCH 25, 2027**
The Bishop Election Committee will contact all identified individuals to ask whether they wish to continue and provide the biographical form and candidate questions.

V. **BY APRIL 5, 2027**
Those who wish to be pre-identified must complete the online Bishop Nominee Biographical Information Form by end of day April 5, 2027.

VI. **BY MAY 11, 2027**
At least 30 days before the Synod Assembly, the committee will publish the names and biographical information of those who agree to proceed. Information will be shared through official synod publications and the pre-assembly report and will remain available through the first day of the assembly.

THIRD STAGE: ELECTION AT SYNOD ASSEMBLY

Voting members will elect a bishop by ecclesiastical ballot at the **June 11–13, 2027** Synod Assembly. Pre-identified individuals must be nominated on the first ballot to enter the assembly election process. Other eligible ELCA Ministers of Word and Sacrament may also be named on that ballot.

See the separate assembly balloting document for voting procedures, nominee information requirements, withdrawal deadlines, and the requirements for election on each ballot.