

Proposed Rules of Organization and Procedure for the Oregon Synod Assembly

Contents

- A. Authority
- B. Members of the Assembly
- C. Credentials
- D. Voting
- E. Rules of Assembly
- F. Bishop's Election
- G. Resolutions and Memorials

A. Authority

The authority for the assembly comes from the *Oregon Synod Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions*, Chapter 7. Synod Assembly.

†S7.01. This synod shall have a Synod Assembly, which shall be its highest legislative authority.

†S7.25. Except as otherwise provided in this constitution or in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, each voting member of the Synod Assembly shall be a voting member of a congregation of this synod.

B. Members of the Assembly

1. *Lay Voting Membership*

1.1. The lay voting members shall be at least 60% of the assembly's total voting membership (†S6.04. and †S7.21.).

1.2. Two voting members shall be allowed per congregation of the Oregon Synod, ELCA. Congregations are reminded of the organizing principle of the ELCA requiring “that at least 45 percent of the lay members of assemblies, councils, committees, boards, or other organizational units shall be women and at least 45 percent shall be men” (†S6.04. and †S7.21.). We encourage you to elect members who do not identify as women or men (gender expansive), to comprise the additional 10%.

1.3. A congregation of 500 baptized members and above may have additional voting members for each 500 members or fraction thereof. (500-999=1 additional voting member; 1,000-1,499=2; 1,500-1,999=3; 2,000-2,499=4.) Additional members from each congregation shall be equally divided between women, men or gender expansive. Baptized membership statistics to be used are those of 2023 parochial report figures. Congregations that did not complete a parochial report for 2023 will be allowed 2 lay voting members regardless of the number of baptized members they have.

1.4. Voting members selected based on paragraphs 1.2. and 1.3. above are classified as Congregation Lay Voting Members. Congregation Lay Voting Members that have registered for the assembly shall be included in the quorum count.

1.5. Representatives from authorized worshiping communities and mission settings of the synod as provided in ELCA Bylaw 10.02.03. (developing ministries in the territory of the synod) are voting members of the Synod Assembly consistent with S7.26.01.

1.6. Synod Authorized Lay Ministers (SALMs) who have been authorized by the bishop to perform clerical duties in an Oregon Synod congregation are voting members of the Synod Assembly.

1.7. In addition to voting members allowed by membership numbers, each congregation will be allowed up to two Additional Voting Members in each of the below categories:

a) Adult members of the congregation and who are persons of color or whose primary language is other than English. Congregations are reminded of the organizing principle of the ELCA in which it is the goal that 10% of the Synod Assembly will consist of people of color or whose primary language isn't English.

b) Youth or young adults. The term "youth" means a voting member of a congregation who has not reached the age of 18 at the time they are elected. The term "young adult" means a voting member of a congregation between the ages of 18 and 30 at the time they are elected.

c) Individuals that self-identify as LGBTQIA+.

1.8. Additional Voting Members as described above in paragraph 1.7 are optional. Additional Voting Members that have registered for the assembly shall be included in the quorum count.

1.9. Synod Council members shall be voting members of the assembly.

1.10. Lay members of the synod executive staff can be voting members of the assembly if they are elected as voting members of an Oregon Synod congregation.

1.11. Costs of all voting members shall be borne by the congregation, institution, mission development or organization that the voting member represents.

2. *Rostered Ministers (Pastors and Deacons) Voting Membership*

- 2.1. Rostered Minister voting members shall not be more than 40% of the assembly's total membership in accordance with †S7.21. Rostered ministers (pastors and deacons) must be on the roster of the Oregon Synod, ELCA as of March 1, 2025. A rostered minister under a call in a congregation of the synod or under call by the synod is a voting member of the assembly.
- 2.2. A retired minister serving as interim/transition or bridge pastor under letter of agreement with a congregation is a voting member of the assembly.
- 2.3. Those rostered ministers of the ELCA who are under call to the Oregon Synod, and who serve agencies and institutions located in the Oregon Synod as of March 1, 2025 are Rostered Minister voting members of the assembly.
- 2.4. Rostered ministers from a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by the ELCA Churchwide Assembly and are in rostered minister service within a congregation of the Oregon Synod will be given the privilege of voice and vote in the Synod Assembly. (S7.27.)
- 2.5. Retired rostered, on leave from call and disability roster ministers may serve as voting members only if their inclusion does not exceed the 40% total of item 2.1 above (S7.22.01.).
- 2.6. Registration for retired, on leave from call and disability roster ministers will be April 1, 2025, through April 8, 2025 once the number of registered lay voting members is known. There may be a limited number or no registration slots available. To be eligible for registration the minister must have completed at least one of the following in the last year; submitted a rostered minister report to the Bishop's Office in 2025 (before April 1) or attended Bishop's Convocation in 2024. The registration link will be sent to all retired, on leave from call and

disability status leaders on our email list and made available on the Oregon Synod website. Registration will be filled on a first come, first served basis and will be closed when full.

2.7. Rostered Minister voting members shall be members of an ELCA or full communion partner congregation within the boundaries of the Oregon Synod.

2.8. No rostered minister on leave from call, retired, on disability status, or serving a social ministry organization shall serve as a lay voting member.

3. *Other Membership*

3.1. The presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and the official representatives of the ELCA shall have voice, but not vote, at this assembly. (†S7.23.) Like privileges shall be accorded to those additional persons whom the Synod Assembly or the Synod Council shall designate, including the parliamentarian and visiting bishops.

C. Credentials

A Credentials Committee of three to five persons shall be appointed and have responsibility for voting members' credentials and attendance status. A quorum will be identified following the reading of the credentials report and shall make a supplementary report after the opening of each plenary session. Voting members must be checked in and seated in the ballroom 20 minutes prior to voting. Check in for registered voting members closes on May 30th at 1pm for voting on May 30th, and on May 31st at 8am for voting on May 31st.

D. Voting

Voting will be conducted in written form via an electronic device, as allowed by the Oregon Synod constitution and Oregon State law. The polls will remain open for a reasonable time, as determined by the chair, to permit voting members to record their votes. Paper ballots will be used as back-up for those unable to vote by electronic methods. The election committee shall ensure no voting member submits multiple votes

E. Rules of the Assembly

1. Robert's Rules of Order, latest edition, shall govern parliamentary procedure of this assembly.(S7.32)
2. All reports published in the Participant Guide shall be received by the assembly without vote. The Participant Guide (including agenda and nominees for open positions that will be voted on) will be posted on the Oregon Synod website and will be emailed to voting members prior to the assembly.
3. The chair shall have the authority to call items of business before the assembly in whatever order they deem expedient for the conduct of assembly business.
4. Every voting member is required to register prior to the assembly by the determined due date. Voting members for each congregation shall be the same persons for the two (2) days of the Assembly. Regular registration will open on February 14, 2025 and close at 10pm March 30, 2025.. Registration will not be allowed after the closing date and time or on site at the event.
5. If a congregation needs to switch to an alternate voting member the synod office must be notified of the change no later than March 30, 2025 at 10:00 pm. After this date, transfers will only be permitted due to exceptional circumstances (serious illness or death) and with an additional fee.

6. For elections of persons to the Synod Council and Committees: If you wish to be considered for a position or to recommend someone else to the Nominations Committee you may fill out a nominations form found on the synod website. The nomination form will be available beginning January 14, 2025. To have your bio information available to voters, the form needs to be submitted by March 7, 2025. There are no nominations from the floor.

7. Each person, when recognized by the Chair, shall state his/her name and congregation or institution before speaking. No speech shall exceed three (3) minutes. This rule does not apply to messages and reports by agencies and officers of the Synod or to guest speakers to whom special time has been allotted.

F. Bishop's Election

1. The representative of the Churchwide organization shall preside over the assembly whenever the assembly is in session and considering business related to the election of the synod bishop, or when the assembly is casting ballots in the bishop's election. Upon conclusion of balloting or of specific business related to the election, the Bishop shall resume presiding over the assembly.

2. The Oregon Synod Bishop's Election is conducted by ecclesiastical ballot. Under this system, the first ballot is an open ballot. Voting members of the assembly write in their prayerfully-considered choice for bishop. This person may be one of the candidates nominated by pre-identification in the months leading up to the assembly, or it may be another candidate. The pre-identified candidate must receive the individual's permission in advance to nominate them and must be able to provide contact information for that individual. The pre-identification period will be open January 14th- March 7th. The nomination

form will be shared via email and available on the Synod Assembly webpage.

Any rostered Minister of Word and Sacrament (pastor) may be nominated

3. A bishop nominee may withdraw between the 1st and 2nd ballots.

4. The ecclesiastical ballot is defined in the synod constitution under †S9.04:

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 one is elected, the first ballot shall be considered the nominating ballot. Three-fourths of the legal votes on the second ballot shall be necessary for election. The third ballot shall be limited to the seven persons (plus ties) who received the greatest number of legal votes on the second ballot, and two-thirds of the 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 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.

5. *Oregon Synod, ELCA Bishop Job Description*

Eligibility:

- Must be minister of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- Must be able to be based from the location of the Oregon Synod Bishop's Office in Portland, OR

Six-year term, starts August 1, 2025

1) Acts as the pastor of the Oregon Synod, and in this capacity:

- Preaches, teaches, and administers the sacraments.
- Has primary responsibility for the ministry of Word and Sacrament in this synod and its congregations, providing pastoral care and leadership for this synod, its

congregations, its ministers of Word and Sacrament, and its ministers of Word and Service.

- Ordains (or provide for the ordination of) approved candidates who have received and accepted a properly issued letter of call.
- Installs (or provides for the installation of) rostered ministers.
- Attests letters of call for persons called to serve congregations in the synod, those called by the Synod Council, and for those on the synod roster called by the Church Council.
- Exercises leadership in the mission of this church and in so doing:
 - Interprets and advocates the mission and theology of the whole church;
 - Leads in fostering support for and commitment to the mission of this church within this synod;
 - Coordinates the use of available synod resources as it seeks to promote the health of this church's life and witness in the areas served by this synod;
 - Submits a report to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly concerning the synod's life and work; and
 - Advises and counsels this synod's related institutions and organizations.
- Practices leadership in strengthening the unity of the Church and in so doing:
 - Exercises oversight of the preaching, teaching, and administration of the sacraments within this synod in accord with the Confession of Faith of this church.
 - Is responsible for administering the constitutionally established processes for the resolution of controversies and for the discipline of rostered ministers and congregations of this synod.
 - Is the chief ecumenical officer of this synod.
 - Is a member of the Conference of Bishops and consult regularly with other synod bishops.
 - Fosters awareness of other churches throughout the Lutheran world communion and, where appropriate, engage in contact with leaders of those churches.
 - Cultivates communion in faith and mission with appropriate Christian judicatory leaders functioning within the territory of this synod
 - Is an *ex officio* member of the Churchwide Assembly.

2) Administration

- Serves as the president and CEO of the Oregon Synod, ELCA corporation.
- Presides at all meetings of the Synod Assembly and provide for the preparation of the agenda for the Synod Assembly, Synod Council, and the council's Executive Committee;
- Ensures that the constitution and bylaws of the synod and of the churchwide organization are observed within this synod, and that the aligned actions of the synod are put into effect;
- Directs and guides the work of the other officers (Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary) and supervises the work of bishop's assistant(s) and synod staff members;
- Appoints all committees for which provision is not otherwise made;
- Is a member of all committees and any other organizational units of the synod, except as otherwise provided in the synod constitution;
- Maintains the roster of active, on leave from call, disability, and retired ministers:
 - provides for preparation and maintenance of synod rosters with names and addresses of all rostered ministers of this synod and a record of the calls under which they are serving or the date on which their retired or disability status took effect;
 - annually brings to the attention of the Synod Council the names of all rostered ministers on leave from call in conformity with the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of this church and pursuant to prior action of this synod through the Synod Council;
 - provides for prompt reporting to the secretary of this church of:
 - additions and subtractions from the rosters of this synod;
 - the issuance of transfers for rostered ministers in good standing who have received and accepted a properly issued and attested letter of call under the jurisdiction of another synod; and
 - the entrance to the synod roster of such persons for whom proper certificates of transfer have been received;
 - provides for preparation and maintenance of a roster of the congregations of this synod and the names of the laypersons who have been elected to represent them; and
 - appoints a statistician of the synod, who shall secure the reports of the congregations and make the reports available to the secretary of

this church for collation, analysis, and distribution of the statistical summaries to this synod and the other synods of this church.

8. The minutes of the Synod Assembly shall be submitted by the Synod Secretary of the Oregon Synod to the Synod Council at its next regular meeting, or as soon as possible. The Synod Council shall examine the minutes, make corrections as needed and approve the minutes of the Synod Assembly. The minutes will then be submitted to the Churchwide Organization by the Secretary.

G. Resolutions and Memorials

The Synod Council shall be responsible for processing resolutions and memorials for consideration at the synod or churchwide assemblies. (S10.07.05.i.)

Synod Council shall appoint a Reference and Counsel Committee for the Synod Assembly consisting of seven members, which shall review all submitted memorials and resolutions using determined criteria, and proposed changes or additions to the constitution and bylaws and other items submitted which are not germane to items contained in the stated agenda of the assembly.

(S10.07.05.m.)

1. Any person or group considering submitting a resolution or memorial to the assembly should first contact Bishop Caesar as early as possible to ensure the assembly is the best place for the chosen topic.
2. Resolutions may be submitted by: congregations of this synod, current assembly voting members, the Synod Council, and committees of the synod.

3. Resolutions and memorials will be accepted for consideration until 10:00 pm March 7, 2025. For resolutions submitted by this date, there will be a three-week period for recommended revisions in consultation with the Reference and Counsel committee. This revision period closes at 10:00 pm on March 28. At that time, whatever is the most recently submitted version of the resolution or memorial will be considered the final form. Resolutions received after March 7th will not be accepted for consideration unless two thirds (2/3) of the Reference and Council Committee or the Synod Council determines that the resolution will not have a fiscal impact, and is 1) of overriding importance, or 2) addresses a previously accepted resolution.

4. All resolutions requiring expenditure of funds shall contain an estimate of fiscal impact. 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).

5. All resolutions will be evaluated using the following criteria:

a. Does the proposed resolution address a synod purpose (as listed in Chapter 7 of the Oregon Synod Constitution), ministry, administrative matter, or other issue affecting the Oregon Synod?

b. Is action on the resolution necessary to the business of the synod (rather than merely bringing the assembly's attention to an issue, organization, or an event)?

c. Is the action sought by the resolution consistent with the Oregon Synod constitution, bylaws and other governing documents?

d. Is the form of the resolution appropriate and clearly drafted?

e. Are the statements in the resolution accurate and necessary to an understanding of the resolution?

6. In evaluating resolutions, the Reference and Counsel Committee may interview the sponsor(s) and other interested persons or otherwise seek relevant information. The sponsor of a resolution may request and shall be given the opportunity to discuss it with the Reference and Counsel Committee.

7. The reviewing body shall adopt a recommendation for each accepted resolution by majority vote and report that recommendation to the Oregon Synod Assembly. The recommendation will be one of the following:

- a. CONSIDER. The resolution complies with the criteria in 3. above.
- b. REFER. The Reference and Counsel committee moves that the resolution should be forwarded for consideration or correction to a specified agency, institution, or group without approval or disapproval by the assembly. The resolution fails to comply with the criteria in 3. above but may be corrected for further assembly consideration or acted on by another body. Reasons for this recommendation will be reported to the assembly with the recommendation.
- c. DO NOT CONSIDER. The committee moves that the resolution not be considered. The resolution fails to comply with the criteria in 3. above, and in the opinion of the committee will not be corrected by reference to another body. Reasons for this recommendation will be reported to the assembly with the recommendation.

8. The recommendation of the Reference and Counsel committee will be communicated to the sponsor of each resolution prior to the assembly. The sponsor may appeal the committee's decision(s) to the Synod Council in writing, stating the action or recommendation sought with reasons for such request. The results of the Synod Council's action (or inaction due to an

inability to meet or form a quorum) will be reported to the sponsor before the conclusion of the assembly.

9. It is the role of the Reference and Counsel Committee to approve any distribution of materials to the assembly's voting membership that does not come from the Synod Council. This must be done at least a month before the event.

10. The debate on resolutions shall be limited to 30 minutes for each resolution. Extensions of debate for a stated period of time will be allowed by a majority vote of the voting members.