

Proposed Rules of Organization and Procedure for the Oregon Synod Assembly

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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. *Registration*

Regular registration will open on April 1st, 2026 and close at 10pm April 30, 2026.

Registration will not be allowed after the closing date and time. If a congregation needs to switch to an alternate voting member the synod office must be notified of the change

no later than April 30, 2026 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.

2. *Registration Costs*

Costs of all congregation voting members (lay and called ministers) shall be borne by the member's congregation, institution, mission development or organization. As voted on by the 2022 Synod Assembly, revenue from fees for virtual assembly years will be applied to offset costs of future in person years.

3. *Lay Voting Membership*

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

3.2. 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%.

3.3. 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 2025 parochial report figures. Congregations that do not complete a parochial report for 2025 will be allowed 2 lay voting members regardless of the number of baptized members they have.

3.4. 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.

3.5. 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.

3.6. 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.

3.7. 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+ /gender expansive.

3.8. 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.

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

3.10. 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.

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

4.1. 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 April 1, 2026. 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.

4.2. A retired minister serving as interim/transition or bridge pastor under letter of agreement with a congregation is a voting member of the assembly.

4.3. 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 April 1, 2026 are Rostered Minister voting members of the assembly.

4.4. 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.)

4.5 Regular registration for the ministers in sections 2.1-2.4 will open on April 1, 2026 and close at 10pm April 30, 2026. Registration will not be allowed after the closing date and time.

4.6 Retired rostered, on leave 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.).

4.7 Registration for retired, on leave and disability roster ministers will open May 1, 2026- May 7, 2026 once the number of registered lay voting members is known. There may be a limited number or no registration slots available. Registration will not be allowed after the closing date and time. Retired ministers bear their own costs for registration (financial assistance may be available).

4.8 To be eligible for retired 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 2026 (before March 23rd) or attended Bishop's Convocation in 2025. The registration link will be sent to all retired, on leave, 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.

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

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

5. *Other Membership*

5.1 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. Rules of the Assembly

1. *Registration*

1.1 Each voting member is required to register prior to the assembly by the determined due date. Registration will not be allowed after the closing date and time. Each registrant must have access to 1) their own email (**not** shared with another person), 2) a way to view or print the participation guide that will be sent electronically to voting members, 3) the knowledge and ability to attend Zoom sessions online, and 4) access to email on May 30th, 2026 for voting on an electronic ballot.

2. *Participation Guide*

2.1 The Participant Guide (including nominee bios for open Synod Council and committee positions, required constitutional changes, proposed constitutional changes, budget, and resolutions and memorials) will be posted on the Oregon Synod website and emailed to voting members by May 15th, 2026.

2.2 All officer and committee reports published in the Participant Guide shall be received by the assembly without vote.

3. *Credentialing*

Credentials will be evaluated by the Bishop's Office staff through a staff review of completed registrations to ensure only the allowed number of voting persons per congregation is registered. All and only registrants deemed credentialed will receive the electronic ballot for voting to the email they have provided.

4. *Nominations*

Nominations for open Synod Council and committee positions will begin on February 6, 2026. You can nominate yourself or someone else (with their permission). The online nomination form, with position descriptions and who the position is open to, will be shared via email and available through the Oregon Synod Assembly webpage.

Nominations will close on March 13th, 2026 at 10pm.

5. *Synod Sessions*

Presentation, Q&A and feedback sessions will be held in April on Zoom in advance of electronic ballot voting on May 30th, 2026. Zoom links and draft documents for each topic will be sent out via email and available on the website the Friday preceding each event. These are the dates for the Synod Sessions:

- Resolutions and Memorials, April 9, 2026 6:00-7:30pm
- Budget, April 16th, 2026 6:00-7:30pm
- Synod Constitution Amendments, April 23rd, 2026 6:00-7:30pm

Each synod session will consist of a presentation, Q&A, and facilitated optional small group feedback and suggestions period. Within the discussion and feedback groups, each individual will have 2 minutes to speak to it, should they choose. All feedback and suggestions will be recorded and shared with the document author for consideration.

6. *Electronic Ballot Voting*

Voting will be conducted via email receipt of an electronic ballot to registrants on May 30th until 11:59pm. Voting will take place to elect new Synod Council members, new committee members, adoption of required constitutional changes, proposed additional constitutional changes, the budget, and resolutions and memorials.

7. *Results*

Results will be shared within one week of voting (before June 6th, 2026) via email and on the Synod Assembly webpage.

8. *Reporting*

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.

D. Resolutions and Memorials

The Synod Council shall be responsible for the processing of resolutions and memorials for consideration at the synod or churchwide assemblies. (S10.07.05.i.). The 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 Synod Assembly is the best place to address 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 13, 2025. Resolutions and memorials submitted by this date will be reviewed by reference and council using the established criteria, with suggestions and required changes feedback given.
4. All resolutions will be evaluated by the Reference and Counsel Committee 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?

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

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. At the Resolutions and Memorials Synod Session on April 9th, attendees will have the opportunity for a Q&A and to provide suggestions and feedback for the authors of each resolution and memorial under review. Within the discussion and feedback groups, each individual will have 2 minutes to speak to it, should they choose. The Q&A and feedback period shall be limited to 30 minutes for each resolution. Suggestions and feedback from Oregon Synod members in attendance will be collated and sent to the authors no later than two days following that meeting (April 11th).

8. The final version of any memorial or resolution is due to the chair of the Reference and Counsel committee by 10:00 pm on April 17th. At that time, whatever is the most recently submitted version of the resolution or memorial will be considered the final form.

9. Resolutions received after March 13th 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.

10. The Reference and Counsel 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.

11. 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.

12. While each submitted resolution or memorial will be available for viewing on the Synod Assembly webpage and in the materials, only the ones that were voted CONSIDER will go before the assembly to be voted on by electronic ballot.