



Resolutions and Memorials

What are Memorials and Resolutions?

Memorials and resolutions are one way this church addresses broad policy issues or important issues for God's mission in the world. Memorials address broad policy issues; resolutions have a narrower focus, requesting consideration or action by individual offices or units, or the Church Council (a resolution can be the preferred method when an issue requires a timely response). The churchwide organization and synods of the ELCA use a process to bring forth memorials and resolutions.

About Memorials and Resolutions

Memorials or resolutions should:

- Be on a topic necessary to the life of the ministry of this church - Be directed to the appropriate body that has the authority to do what is requested: Synod Council, Church Council, Churchwide Assembly, or a churchwide organization unit.
- Use non-inflammatory and non-argumentative language with straightforward nouns and verbs.
- Submitted in either Word or Google Doc format.

Validating Your Idea

Important considerations:

- Do your research - has a similar resolution been passed at a previous assembly? Have you discussed your proposed resolution with other people? Do you have authoring partners or allies? If you have a difficult time convincing other individuals that your resolution is necessary, you may find it even harder to convince the assembly.
- A resolution and memorial may not be combined into one action - A

resolution or memorial that conflicts with the governing documents of this church cannot be considered

- A resolution or memorial can request action from the body, but cannot direct it
- Memorials and resolutions often require valuable resources (financial and staff) to bring to fruition, so careful consideration of whether to bring forth a resolution or memorial, clear proposed action, a complete estimation of financial implications, and unambiguous, accurate and concise wording are critical. Resolutions or memorials may not be able to be supported for budgetary reasons, that if adopted, may have adverse consequences on existing programs or ministries. How will your idea be funded?

As an example of the potential financial resources needed; to bring a memorial to fruit as a social statement in 2019 was a five-year process at a cost of \$300,000. An edit of a memorial is \$50,000-\$100,000 depending on the work needed for the edit.

If questions exist regarding the potential implications of a proposed resolution or memorial, inquiries to the Office of the Secretary are encouraged.

What is the Difference Between a Memorial and a Resolution?

Resolutions	Memorials
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have a narrower focus• Request consideration or action by the Synod Council to churchwide organization units or the Church Council (churchwide)• Allows for a more timely response.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Address broad policy issues• Are considered for action every three years by the Churchwide Assembly• Comes from Synod Assembly to Churchwide Assembly
<i>They address different issues, different bodies, and on different timelines.</i>	

Writing a Memorial or Resolution

1) The first section is whereas clauses (if any)

- Whereas clauses provide background information and are not part of the action. Each clause should state a reason for the resolution or memorial.
- Whereas clauses should be used sparingly and only in cases where it provides little-known information without which the point or the merits of a resolution are likely to be poorly understood. It is encouraged to submit just the resolved clauses as the resolved clauses contain the action for consideration.

2) This is followed by resolved clauses

- Resolved clauses must clearly and concisely state the desired action.
 - What should be done?
 - How should it be done?
 - Who should do it? (CW Assembly, Church council, Synod Council OR Churchwide assembly unit).
 - When should it be done? Timeline

The final "resolved" clause(s) asks the Synod Council or Churchwide Assembly to act (or refrain from acting) in a particular way. For example:

In a Resolution

RESOLVED, that the Oregon Synod Assembly direct the Synod Council to forward this resolution to the Church Council for consideration and possible action.

Or

RESOLVED, that the Synod Council request the Church Council to ... [clearly describe the proposed course of action].

In a Memorial

RESOLVED, that the Oregon Synod Assembly memorialize the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to ... [clearly describe the proposed course of action].

3) Finally, a list of the author(s) should be added at the end

As a reminder, all memorials and resolutions must be examined for potential financial and Bishop's staff resources impacts and include a summary of these implications when submitted.

Committee Review

As noted in the 2026 Rules of Assembly, all memorials and resolutions must be reviewed by the bishop before being submitted and are due before March, 13th, 2026 at 10pm. 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). 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.

Resolutions and memorials approved by the Reference and Counsel committee to come before the assembly will be shared in the voting member materials. Those not approved or submitted past the deadline will be included in the assembly materials on the Oregon Synod Assembly webpage.

For Resolutions and Memorials Submitted by the Deadline

The 2026 Rules of Assembly provide that memorials and resolutions reviewed by the bishop and submitted by the due date in advance of assembly will be referred to the Reference and Counsel Committee. Reference and Counsel will decide whether to recommend to the assembly the resolution or memorial in its current form, or whether it goes to reference and counsel for further review (revising, etc.).

What will the Reference and Counsel Committee be considering as they evaluate memorials or resolutions?

- Did the bishop review the resolution or memorial before submission?
- Is the proposed resolution/memorial in proper format and appropriate, or does it have deficiencies in context?
- 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?
- Is action on the resolution necessary to the business of the synod or asking for an action (rather than merely bringing the Assembly's attention to an issue, organization, or an event)?
- Is the action sought by the resolution consistent with the Oregon Synod constitution, bylaws and other governing documents?
- Are the statements in the resolution accurate and necessary to an understanding of the resolution?

Resolutions and Memorials NOT submitted by the Deadline

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
- of overriding importance, or
- addresses a previously accepted resolution.

Based on meeting the above criteria, it will be considered if time allows and the assembly votes to address the resolution. If the assembly is unable to address them at assembly they will be forwarded to Synod Council.

Any memorial or resolution which the Reference and Council Committee recommends to be considered will be brought forward by the Reference and Council Committee Chair for the body to vote on at the Synod Assembly.