



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
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MEMORANDUM

To: Synod Bishops and Vice Presidents

From: Sue Rothmeyer, Walter May, Deborah Coe

Date: January 15, 2020

Subject: Toolkit for Synod Bishop Elections

This toolkit is designed to serve as an aid to synod councils, Bishop's Election Committees and those who are preparing to conduct the election of a bishop in 2020. The concept was affirmed by the Executive Committee of the Conference of Bishops, as well as synods that initiated contact with the churchwide organization regarding their nomination and election processes. The 2020 Toolkit for Synod Bishop Elections and related documents are located under the "Synods" tab of the Office of the Secretary's resource page: <http://www.ELCA.org/Resources/Office-of-the-Secretary>.

This memorandum describes the contents of the Toolkit for Synod Bishop Election and provides information regarding how items in the Toolkit can be used. Of course, nothing in the Toolkit supersedes or amends the governing documents of the synod. As described in detail in the first document in the Toolkit – Guidelines for Synod Bishop Elections – each synod's constitution contains a provision or provisions regarding the nomination and election of a synod bishop, and there may be other procedures or processes that have been adopted by synod councils that are not incorporated into governing documents. As a matter of governance, these provisions must be followed. However, neither the model provision in the *Constitution for Synods* used by most synods (S9.04.) nor variations thereof in some synods address all issues involved in the nomination and election of a bishop. Therefore, we are presenting this Toolkit to provide useful information and suggestions for synod leadership regarding important aspects of the call process for a synod bishop.

The contents of the Toolkit for Synod Bishop Elections will not apply to every synod and may be adapted based upon local context. Indeed, we encourage synod councils and Bishop's Election Committees to carefully craft the suggestions in various documents to fit local circumstances. The overriding considerations are to faithfully implement the synod's governing documents and to educate and inspire synods as they engage in a discernment process resulting in a call for service as a synod bishop.

The contents of the Toolkit for Synod Bishop Elections are as follows:

- ***Guidelines for Synod Bishop Election.*** These Guidelines have been issued annually for the past several years, and the 2020 version now has been disseminated. They remain a cornerstone document in evaluating the processes for the nomination and election of a synod bishop. The Guidelines review the nomination and election processes, identify issues that must be addressed, and provide suggestions based on experience over many years. They also include appendices that provide ballot forms, sample rules of organization and procedure, sample questions for nominees, a sample biographical information form, a release form authorizing background checks, etc.

- ***Constitutional provisions regarding synods and the role of the synod bishop.*** The applicable constitutional provisions describing the responsibilities of synods are found in Chapter 8 of the *Constitution for Synods*. The duties of a bishop are addressed in provision †S8.12. of the *Constitution for Synods*. In addition, several provisions from the ELCA constitution, which address the foundational concept of interdependence, also are included. (Exhibit B)
- ***Timeline.*** The enclosed timeline identifies key events and recommends a sequence of events for addressing issues involved in the nomination and election processes. (Exhibit C)
- ***Planning, Research and Evaluation Reports and Survey.*** Each synod will be provided individual demographic reports based upon congregational reports and other data evaluated by Planning, Research and Evaluation. These are intended to provide essential background information to facilitate discussion within the synod about priorities for future mission and ministry and desired leadership attributes. This information is analogous to but not as extensive as data provided in the past for ministry reviews and audits. Upon reasonable request, additional or different data may be obtained. In addition, Planning, Research and Evaluation will assist synods in conducting a survey by providing sample questions and instructions for setting up a survey. Such a survey expands participation in the discernment process and provides data in addition to information collected at conference or cluster meetings. Planning, Research and Evaluation will not analyze the survey results but will forward responses to synods for evaluation. The synod specific data for 2017 are now available under the “Synod Statistics” tab of the Planning, Research and Evaluation resource page: <http://www.ELCA.org/en/Resources/Research-and-Evaluation>; 2018 data will be available soon. For more information, contact John Hessian at John.Hessian@elca.org. (Exhibit D)
- ***Agenda and suggestions for conference/cluster meetings.*** One of the premises underlying the Toolkit is that a review and assessment of the synod’s ministry are necessary aspects of the discernment process in the nomination and election of a bishop. Regardless of the nomination and election processes required by the synod’s governing documents, conversations among as many people as possible (both lay persons and rostered ministers) facilitate discernment by identifying and evaluating ministry priorities and focusing on desired leadership attributes. These discussions also provide an opportunity to evaluate the status of the synod’s strategic plan, if one exists, and to provide a foundation for future strategic planning, if a plan does not exist. The attached agenda and suggestions can be adapted for use in different venues and with different audiences, but the constituent elements of the meetings are important in all contexts: Bible study and prayer; information about the nomination and election processes; conversation about the synod’s ministries and priorities; conversation about leadership attributes and qualities; report back and distillation of the meeting; and dissemination of meeting conclusions. Conference or cluster meetings provide an appropriate venue for these discussions, but some synods schedule separate meetings to address these issues. Whatever the context, it is important to capture and share the results of the meetings so that they can inform the discernment process. The organization of these meetings may be coordinated with the survey described above in order to obtain consistent input from many sources that can be evaluated by the synod as part of the discernment process. (Exhibit E)
- ***Sample prayers for discernment.*** Individual and communal prayer is an indispensable ingredient of a discernment process. The enclosed prayers have been developed by the worship team in the Office of the Presiding Bishop. They may be used in conjunction with meetings addressing nomination and election processes, distributed to congregations, or provided for individual devotions. Of course, synods may develop other prayers and worship resources for gatherings and assemblies. (Exhibit F)
- ***Transition checklist.*** In addition to considerations relating to nominations and elections, related issues regarding possible transition should be considered by the Synod Council. The enclosed transition checklist has been developed to identify pertinent issues and to sensitize synod leadership regarding the possible implications and timing of transition in the office of synod bishop. (Exhibit G)

- ***Affirmation of Ministry (at the re-election of a synod bishop)***. In the event that a synod bishop is re-elected, an affirmation of ministry may be used at the Synod Assembly. A short rite for the affirmation of ministry is enclosed. (Exhibit H)
- ***Lists of synods holding elections from 2018 through 2021***. Some of the best resources regarding bishop nomination and election processes are the work of other synods. The enclosed list identifies those synods that held bishop elections in 2018 and 2019 and those that will hold elections in 2020 and 2021. Review of websites of these synods and conversations with their leaders will provide context and assistance for synod bishop election committees and other synod leaders. (Exhibit I)
- ***The Office and Ministry of the Bishop in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America: A Shared Vision of Episcopacy and A Relational Agreement*** (referred to as the Bishops' Relational Agreement) was developed and adopted by the Conference of Bishops to describe the responsibilities of synod bishops and their relationship together as the Conference of Bishops. (Exhibit J)

The Office of the Presiding Bishop and the Office of the Secretary are committed to assisting synods as they develop and implement processes and engage in communal discernment regarding the nomination and election of their bishops. Following initial telephone conferences in January 2020, individual telephone calls with synods will take place in early 2020. In the meantime, do not hesitate to contact us if you have questions or comments about resources.

May God richly bless you in your discernment process!

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Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

Guidelines for Synod Bishop Elections

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I. Introduction

Electing a bishop is one of the most important responsibilities in the life of a synod in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and a key responsibility of the Synod Assembly. As an election, it is a process governed by the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of the synod; however, it is also a call process. As such, it involves discernment, from the perspective both of individual potential nominees and of the synod as a whole.¹ Thus, engaging in prayerful reflection and seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit are indispensable aspects of the process of nomination and election, regardless of the particular provisions in the synod's governing documents.

Thoughtful preparation also is an important ingredient in the process of nominating and electing a bishop. The Office of the Presiding Bishop and the Office of the Secretary have reviewed the nomination and election processes of many synods and have prepared these guidelines to assist your synod in this important endeavor. It is our goal to support you in the process of nomination and election of a bishop and to provide information, so you can avoid pitfalls that have occurred elsewhere. Do not hesitate to telephone or e-mail us if you have any questions or concerns.

As you begin to consider the nomination and election of a bishop, it may be useful to prepare a profile of your synod and reflect on the attributes desired in a bishop. You can approach preparing a profile just as a congregation prepares a profile as part of a call process.² In considering attributes for a bishop, you can begin by reviewing the responsibilities of a synod bishop as delineated in provision †S8.12. in the *Constitution for Synods* and consider also the practice in your synod. Although the substance of these guidelines addresses procedures and pitfalls, prayerful reflection on the ministry of the synod and thoughtful consideration of the role of the bishop are critical aspects at each stage of the nomination and election process.

II. The Constitutional Context

Chapter 9 of your synod's constitution addresses nominations and elections. S9.04. specifically addresses the process for the election of a bishop. Because this provision in the *Constitution for Synods* is not required, considerable variety exists among synods in the processes for the nomination and election of bishops. Regardless of the specifics, it is exceedingly important that the requirements of the constitution and any applicable bylaws or continuing resolutions be followed carefully.³

¹ This document will refer to persons nominated for the office of synod bishop as "nominees" to underscore that this is a church process. The word "candidate" should be avoided because it implies a political process.

² The Planning, Research and Evaluation team in the churchwide organization can assist your synod by providing important demographic data, and the Office of the Presiding Bishop can provide examples of synod profiles prepared in connection with bishop nomination and election processes.

³ If a bishop will be elected at a special meeting of the Synod Assembly, care must be taken to review and comply with the synod's articles of incorporation, as well as the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions. This step is particularly important when it comes to defining voting members of a special assembly. In general, provisions in the articles of incorporation control if there are inconsistencies with the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions. If you have a question, contact the Office of the Secretary.

S9.04. in the *Constitution for Synods* states:

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 cast 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 legal 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 legal 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. ⁴

Some synods use a modified ecclesiastical ballot that allows identification and nomination of nominees before the Synod Assembly. In some circumstances, the first ballot may contain previously selected nominees. Some synods had developed identification processes by Synod Council action. Most of these do not have previously identified names on the ballot but do post biographical information that is available to voting members. The actual voting process follows the traditional “ecclesiastical ballot” procedures.

In response to requests from synods for a definition of “ecclesiastical ballot” and guidance on its use, the Church Council in 1994 adopted the following definition:

To define an “ecclesiastical ballot” for the election of a bishop in synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as an election process:

1. in which on the first ballot the name of any eligible individual may be submitted for nomination by a voting member of the assembly;
2. through which the possibility of election to office exists on any ballot by achievement of the required number of votes cast by voting members of the assembly applicable to a particular ballot;
3. that precludes spoken floor nominations;
4. in which the first ballot is the nominating ballot if no election occurs on the first ballot;
5. in which the first ballot defines the total slate of nominees for possible election on a subsequent ballot, with no additional nominations permitted;
6. that does not preclude, after the reporting of the first ballot, the right of persons nominated to withdraw their names prior to the casting of the second ballot;

⁴ The adjective “legal” in this (and other) provisions was added as the result of action taken at the Churchwide Assembly in 2001. If your synod constitution incorporated this change pursuant to †S18.12., invalid or illegal votes are not counted in determining the percentage needed for election. An illegal vote is a ballot, for instance, on which the name of a person not eligible for election to a synod bishop is submitted. An example of an “illegal” vote would be any ballots cast for persons who are not on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of the ELCA. Similarly, if a ballot is unintelligible, it is not considered a legal vote. If the term “legal” is not used in your synod’s S9.04. provision or in the rules of procedure adopted by the Synod Assembly, all votes cast are counted for determining the applicable percentages. Whether or not the word “legal” appears in your synod constitution, however, blank ballots or abstentions never are counted and are ignored. See *Robert’s Rules of Order (Newly Revised)*, 11th ed., Section 44.

7. in which any name appearing on the second ballot may not be subsequently withdrawn;
8. that does not preclude an assembly's adoption of rules that permit, at a defined point in the election process and for a defined period of time, speeches to the assembly by nominees or their representatives and/or a question-and-answer forum in which the nominees or their representatives participate; and
9. in which the number of names that appear on any ballot subsequent to the second ballot shall be determined in accordance with the provisions of the governing documents (or, if the governing documents are silent, in accordance with rules adopted by the assembly).⁵

Whether or not your synod's constitution provides for the ecclesiastical ballot according to this definition, your governing documents must be reviewed and followed carefully to ensure a proper process that cannot be challenged.

III. Pre-election Issues

Several issues must be addressed in advance of the Synod Assembly to ensure a thoughtful and orderly process for the bishop's election, consistent with your synod's governing documents. This section identifies and briefly discusses these issues.

A. Synod Council Responsibilities

The Synod Council has oversight responsibility to make certain that the process for nomination and election of a bishop is competently and fairly handled. As indicated above, it is important to understand and follow the synod's governing documents and to make use of resources available through the churchwide organization.⁶

It also is advisable to review minutes of prior synod assemblies at which bishop elections occurred to determine and evaluate prior nomination and election practices. Additionally, it is sometimes useful to confer with the officers of other synods that have recently elected a bishop. The ELCA listservs provide a convenient vehicle to ask questions and solicit input regarding bishop nomination and election processes from synod bishops, vice presidents and secretaries.

A threshold issue that must be addressed well in advance is the composition of the Synod Assembly. Constitutional provision †S7.21. prescribes the composition of the Synod Assembly and requires that at least 60 percent of voting members be laypersons. Bylaw †S6.04.01. establishes a goal that 10 percent of the membership in the Synod Assembly be persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English. †S6.04.02. establishes a goal that at least 10 percent of the voting members the Synod Assembly be youth and young adults and requires the Synod Council to develop a plan to implement this goal. In addition, S7.22. authorizes the synod to establish

⁵ This definition was codified for elections at the Churchwide Assembly in continuing resolution 19.01.C19.

⁶ If the Synod Council is considering amendment of S9.04. or the adoption of new or revised bylaws regarding the bishop nomination and election process or the composition of the Synod Assembly, it is important to take into account the requisite amendment process and timelines specified in Chapter 18 of the *Constitution for Synods*. The changes should take place no later than the Synod Assembly preceding the assembly at which a bishop is to be elected.

processes that permit retired rostered ministers and those rostered ministers on leave from call or with disability status to serve as voting members; S7.26. authorizes the synod to establish processes that permit representatives of synod-authorized worshipping communities to serve as voting members; and S7.27. authorizes the synod to establish processes that permit ministers of Word and Sacrament from full communion partners serving congregations in the synod to serve as voting members.⁷ In all cases, extra care is warranted in determining the composition of the Synod Assembly when a bishop's election will take place to ensure that constitutional prerequisites are met.

Whether or not a synod utilizes the ecclesiastical ballot, numerous decisions must be timely made and communicated regarding the nomination and election process. With respect to pre-assembly matters, the Synod Council must determine if there will be informational meetings regarding the bishop's nomination and election process. It is desirable and useful to identify and discuss what the synod is looking for in terms of leadership and the desired attributes of a bishop and to recall the commitments of this church to raise up and support faithful, wise, and courageous leaders, including persons of color and women. Information should be disseminated to congregations so that they are aware of the important responsibility that will be exercised by their voting members. If informational meetings or forums will be held, it is important to ensure that they be scheduled throughout the synod in a way to maximize synod-wide exposure and opportunity for input from both rostered and lay persons. Whether or not informational meetings or forums are held, it is important to publicize the upcoming election and provide congregations and individuals information regarding the role and responsibilities of the bishop and the nomination and election process in a timely manner. Synod websites provide a useful tool to disseminate information, but synods must be careful to consider other methods of communication because not all voting members will have a computer or be comfortable with its use.

In addition, the Churchwide Assembly in 2009 adopted an amendment to the *Constitution for Synods* mandating background checks and screening of nominees for synod officers. Constitutional provision †S9.12. provides:

Background checks and screening shall be required and completed for persons nominated as synod officers prior to their election, if possible, or as soon as practical after their election. The specific procedures and timing of background checks and screening shall be determined by the Synod Council.

Under this provision, the Synod Council must develop a protocol and conduct background checks and screening before the Synod Assembly on nominees for bishop, if there is a pre-assembly nomination process. This protocol should include the process that the Synod Council or Executive Committee will follow if information is revealed in the background check that might affect the nominee's ability to serve in this office. The Office of the Presiding Bishop and the Office of the Secretary are available to assist the Executive Committee should something be discovered. If the election will take place by ecclesiastical ballot, a background check and screening must be conducted as soon as

⁷ If processes are established for additional rostered ministers to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly in accordance with S7.22., S7.26. and S7.27., the Synod Council must ensure that the total membership of the Synod Assembly is comprised of at least 60 percent laypersons. In accordance with †S7.21., additional lay representatives must be based upon the number of baptized members in congregations.

practical after the election using a protocol developed by the Synod Council. Regardless of the timing of the background checks and screening, it is important to establish the process and advise potential nominees about it in advance of the Synod Assembly. (The Appendix contains a form authorizing background checks and screening, as well as the protocol for background checks and screening of churchwide officers. In addition to the authorization for a background check, there is a sample disclosure form that also should be completed by the nominee.)

The Synod Council also must determine if there will be other election procedures in addition to those described in the governing documents. For example, S9.04. does not provide for a question-and-answer period or speeches by the nominees. Many synods have question-and-answer periods and/or speeches at some time during the election process. Some synods also have other steps in the election process.⁸ Whether or not to use such procedures should be addressed by the Synod Council well in advance of the Synod Assembly and the ground rules disseminated so that potential nominees, congregations, and voting members understand the process. Once decisions are made about using these additional steps in the election process, the Synod Council must determine whether to incorporate them into the synod's governing documents or the applicable rules of organization and procedure or standing rules of the assembly. (The Appendix contains sample rules for incorporation into the rules of organization and procedure or standing rules.)

In addition, it is very important to ensure that the people preparing the agenda build into it enough time so that the election can take place smoothly. Thus, as part of its oversight capacity, the Synod Council should take care that adequate time is incorporated into the agenda to facilitate counting ballots (especially the first ballot), allowing withdrawal of nominees, contact of absent nominees, completion and dissemination of biographical information, question-and-answer periods, speeches and other activities involved in the election process.

Some synods have utilized electronic voting for Bishop's Election. Although the technology can expedite the counting and tabulation of results, some significant problems have occurred using electronic voting. If this option will be used, the Elections Committee must carefully coordinate with the person(s) responsible for the voting machines so that everyone is familiar with voting procedures and reporting responsibilities and protocols. Based on prior experience, it may not be advisable to use voting machines for the first time at an assembly at which a bishop will be elected. Even if electronic voting is selected, it is important to plan on back up voting methods. Recent experience has seen voting machine failures, so back up methods were necessary. This means having ballots or paper available and enough people prepared to count written ballots. Agendas will need to be adjusted if this becomes necessary.

Once the Synod Council addresses all the issues relating to the process for election of the bishop, the process must be disseminated to voting members and others sufficiently

⁸ For example, at least one synod has asked each of the final three nominees to prepare and present a Bible study using a pre-selected text.

in advance of the Synod Assembly to afford the opportunity for conversation and prayerful reflection. In addition, if pre-assembly responsibilities are delegated to the Bishop's Election Committee or other designees, the Synod Council should provide explicit instructions, including expectations for reporting and oversight.

The conclusion or potential conclusion of a bishop's tenure also raises important issues regarding closure, transition and acknowledgment of service. Important issues also exist relating to synod staff in times of transition. These issues warrant thoughtful and prayerful consideration by synod leadership in collaboration with the Office of the Presiding Bishop and should not be neglected as preparation takes place for the nomination and election process.

B. Bishop's Election Committee⁹ Responsibilities¹⁰

A Bishop's Election Committee, chaired by a person knowledgeable about the synod and its governing documents and procedures, can significantly facilitate the nomination and election process. The timing of the appointment of committee members also is important. If the Bishop's Election Committee will be responsible for informational meetings or forums before the Synod Assembly or other pre-assembly activities such as obtaining biographical information or collecting questions for nominees, it is important to appoint and train the Bishop's Election Committee in a timely manner.¹¹

In considering the composition of the Bishop's Election Committee, avoid appointing persons who are likely to be nominated for bishop. (In the case of elections using the ecclesiastical ballot, a potential committee member should indicate that he or she will withdraw after the nominating ballot prior to appointment to the committee.) It is also important to appoint enough members to the Bishop's Election Committee to address pre-assembly responsibilities as well.

The responsibilities of the Bishop's Election Committee should be carefully specified by the Synod Council. For example, the committee's charter should address who is responsible for preparing announcements and disseminating information regarding the nomination and election process, setting up pre-assembly informational meetings or forums (if they will occur), drafting questions for nominees (if there will be a question-and-answer period), assisting nominees through the process, addressing absent nominees (including notification, obtaining biographical information, and arranging for representatives to make presentations, if applicable).

⁹ Please note that the Bishop's Election Committee is not necessarily the Elections Committee of the Synod Assembly. The Bishop's Election Committee is responsible for the process related to the election of a synod bishop. The Elections Committee of the assembly is responsible for the counting of ballots and the reporting of results. These are two separate, but important, committees.

¹⁰ Some synods have suggested designating the Bishop's Election Committee as the "Call Committee." This title is not recommended because the committee does not operate similar to a congregational call committee which does not oversee an election process.

¹¹ Some synods utilize a modified ecclesiastical ballot and have conferences/clusters nominate persons for bishop in advance of the Synod Assembly. In some cases, the initial nominations are made several months in advance of the Synod Assembly. If the Synod Council delegates responsibility for eliciting nominations to a Bishop's Election Committee, it must be appointed and educated on the processing of such nominees substantially before the initial deadline.

The Bishop's Election Committee may be responsible for working with tellers/ushers to distribute ballots and oversee the counting of ballots. This work could also be accomplished by the Elections Committee responsible for the other elections that are held at the assembly. It is important that enough people be identified in advance of the assembly to count the first two ballots, at least. These counters should not be voting members of the assembly and would not be persons whose name may be on the ballot. On the first ballot, if the name of someone counting the ballots is discovered, that person should recuse themselves from counting, unless or until they have withdrawn their name from consideration.

C. Information from Nominees

Regardless of the mechanism used to obtain nominations for bishop, the synod must be prepared to obtain biographical and other information from nominees. To facilitate this process, a form for biographical and other information should be used that is the same for all nominees. (A sample form is attached in the Appendix.¹²) This form should be provided in enough time so that potential nominees will have obtained the information necessary for its completion in advance. Some synods are making computer stations available to nominees to complete this form. If computer stations are provided, they should be in a quiet room or in a place that is away from the traffic flow of voting members. In addition, it will be important for the Bishop's Election Committee to be prepared to facilitate completion of the form by nominees who are not physically present.

With respect to substance, both background information and responses to open-ended questions should be obtained. Because communication skills are important for a bishop, voting members should have the opportunity to see how nominees answer important questions in writing. Open-ended questions also allow nominees to address issues raised in the synod's profile and important synod priorities.

At whatever stage of the process biographical information is obtained, the Bishop's Election Committee should review the forms submitted by nominees before they are finalized and distributed. For the appearance of fairness, completed forms should be disseminated at the same time for all nominees, if possible. If nominees are identified in advance, biographical and other information can be posted on the synod's website and distributed to congregations and voting members.¹³

D. Liaison with the Churchwide Organization

The Church Council appoints representatives of the churchwide organization to attend Synod Assemblies. In assemblies at which bishops' elections will occur, the churchwide representative is willing and trained to conduct the election itself, if desired by the Synod Council. A decision should be made about who will conduct the election

¹² The scope and content of questionnaires vary from synod to synod. Each synod should evaluate the information requested in a questionnaire in light of its individual circumstances. A pivotal consideration is uniformity and the equal opportunity of all nominees to complete the form.

¹³ One synod that identified nominees before the Synod Assembly videotaped presentations and posted them on the synod's website. If this approach is utilized, care must be taken that the presentations are not campaign speeches.

before the nomination and election process begins, if possible. If the churchwide representative will chair the assembly during the election process, a rule of procedure should be included as part of the adoption of the rules at the start of the assembly. A model rule is in Appendix C.

The Office of the Presiding Bishop and the Office of the Secretary will endeavor to keep lines of communication open with the persons in the synod who will be responsible for the bishop's election. Conference calls between representatives of the churchwide organization and the Bishop Election Committee and/or Executive Committee should take place to review the nomination and election process and issues relating to it. In addition, within approximately 30 days of the Synod Assembly, the churchwide representative at the Synod Assembly and the Bishop Election Committee and/or Executive Committee should confer.

IV. The Synod Assembly

By the time the Synod Assembly convenes, voting members should be thoroughly oriented and the agenda and rules of organization and procedure or standing rules should be carefully crafted to facilitate the election process.¹⁴ In addition, the Elections Committee must be ready to proceed with the election.

A. Introduction of the Election Process

Because the election of a bishop is both an election and a call process, it is appropriate to devote time before the first ballot for reflection on the office of the bishop. The churchwide representative will be prepared to speak on the role and responsibilities of the synod bishop and the importance of the election process. Time should be allotted for this reflection. If the churchwide representative is doing this, be sure to communicate with them in advance of preparing the agenda so that enough time is planned. The meditation reflects the spiritual content and context of the decision the assembly will make in the election. Pausing at the beginning of the process to ponder the duties of the office and the meaning of calling a pastor for the synod is an introductory step that facilitates a wholesome and Spirit-led election process. Further, the presentation includes leading the assembly voting members in prayer as they embark on their crucial responsibility in the life of this church. Modeling the importance of prayer and reflection sets an important precedent and tone for each subsequent step in the election process.

After the initial meditation, the person chairing the election process should review the governing documents and describe in detail to the assembly the procedures regarding the ballots to be cast, the required margins for elections, the timing of balloting, and other aspects of the election process. Add a rule of procedure if the churchwide representative is chairing these sessions.

¹⁴ Sample rules of organization and procedure providing for processes addressed in this section are contained in the Appendix C.

B. Credentials Committee Responsibilities

In all deliberative assemblies, including synod assemblies, the registration of voting members and the issuance of appropriate credentials are important responsibilities. It is even more important when elections occur. Because only voting members may cast ballots for the election of officers, voting members must be appropriately registered and identified in advance of the balloting.

Provisions in Chapter 7 of the *Constitution for Synods* address the membership of the Synod Assembly. Constitutional provision †S7.21. specifies the composition of the voting membership of the Synod Assembly. Members of the Synod Council who are not otherwise elected as voting members have the privilege of voice and vote, pursuant to S7.28. In addition, other provisions in Chapter 7 provide options to allow other persons attending Synod Assemblies to have voice and vote. For example, under S7.22., retired rostered ministers and ministers on leave from call or with disability status who are not voting members have the privilege of voice but not vote at a Synod Assembly, but the Synod Council may establish processes to make such persons voting members. S7.26. and S7.27. also authorize the Synod Council to establish processes to allow other designated persons to have voice and vote. *Only those persons authorized in Chapter 7 of the synod's constitution can serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly and vote in the bishop's election.* However, synods may provide in their rules of organization and procedure or standing rules that others have voice (but not vote) at the Synod Assembly. Of course, guests almost always attend a Synod Assembly, but they have neither voice nor vote.

Regardless of registration procedures for others, the Credentials Committee must ensure that voting members are appropriately registered and issued credentials that allow them to be identified at the time of balloting. It is generally not desirable to authorize seating of others with voting members. Careful preparation of registration processes and identification of voting members at the time of balloting will minimize the risk of a challenge to election results or an invalid ballot.

It also is important to coordinate reports of the Credentials Committee with balloting. This avoids the potential problem, which has materialized in synods on occasion, where there are more ballots cast than voting members reported present. This may require closing registration/check in for a time prior to each ballot for bishop. This should be communicated to all voting members in advance of the assembly. As a practical matter, an abbreviated credentials report announcing the number of voting members present should be made immediately before each ballot.¹⁵

C. The First Ballot

As indicated above, the process of balloting should be prefaced by a reflection on the election of a bishop. After the meditation and the report of the Credentials Committee, the person conducting the election will review the process for casting the first ballot, announce the vote required for election, and solicit questions. (Pursuant to *Robert's Rules*

¹⁵ It is neither necessary nor desirable to have a complete report of the Credentials Committee before each vote. Once a quorum exists and the Synod Assembly is properly constituted, the interim reports of the Credentials Committee should include only the number of voting members present.

of Order [Newly Revised], 11th ed., Section 45, once voting begins, there should not be any interruptions, so care should be taken to ensure that the opportunity exists to answer all questions before initiating the voting process.) During this time persons who are not voting members should move to areas outside those occupied by voting members.

The Elections Committee or designated tellers should distribute the ballots, if paper ballots are utilized, upon instruction of the person presiding at the election. (The Appendix contains sample forms for written ballots.) Only voting members should receive ballots. Once ballots are distributed, the person presiding will explain the proper method for voting (writing a name, circling a name, checking a box, etc.).¹⁶ Members should be asked to refrain from marking their ballots until instructed to do so. In addition, the process for collecting ballots should be explained. (For ease of counting, it is advisable not to fold paper ballots; instruct members to turn ballots face down and pass them in a designated direction.)

It is appropriate and recommended to transition from instruction to voting with a period of silence, followed by prayer. (Either the person presiding at the election or a member of a synod prayer team may lead the prayer, but in all cases the person[s] should be designated in advance and prayers offered should be worded carefully.) After silence and prayer, the presiding person will announce that the first ballot for bishop will now be taken and instruct voting members to mark their ballots.

The Elections Committee or designated tellers should collect *all* ballots when instructed by the person presiding at the election. After the voting and collection of ballots, the presiding officer will declare that the first ballot is closed. Thereafter, the Elections Committee will count and tabulate the results in private. The ELCA Digital Directory can be used to check that a person is on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament (directory.elca.org). Any questions regarding the counting should be addressed to the person presiding over the election.

All blank ballots should be discarded and neither counted nor reported. Ballots cast, both legal and illegal, should be retained until after the Synod Assembly adjourns, when they should be discarded.

It is important that assembly planners integrate enough time into the agenda to allow for counting and tabulating the first ballot.

D. Reporting of Election Results

Synod constitutional provision S9.09. specifies that the result of each ballot in every election shall be announced in detail to the Synod Assembly. Thus, for the first ballot and all succeeding ballots for the election of a bishop, both the names of the individuals

¹⁶ The ecclesiastical ballot process does not allow spoken nominations from the floor. (See ELCA continuing resolution 19.01.C19.) If the first ballot is designated a nominating ballot under other election processes, spoken nominations from the floor are not necessary or desirable. If the first ballot is not designated as a nominating ballot, applicable governing document provisions or rules of procedure should address whether spoken nominations from the floor are authorized.

and the vote totals for each person must be reported to the assembly as part of the report of the Elections Committee. (A form for the report of each ballot is contained in the Appendix.) Regardless of the form, the report should include the number of total votes cast, the number of illegal votes cast, the number of legal votes cast, and the number of votes needed for election on the particular ballot, as well as each nominee's name and the number of votes each person received. (See paragraph I below for special instructions when a ballot results in an election.) It also is advisable to post the report of the first ballot after it is announced. The report form should be maintained by the synod secretary for purposes of preparing assembly minutes. A copy of the report form should also be given to the churchwide representative.

After the report of the first ballot, the presiding officer will address the process for nominees to withdraw from the election process, as explained in more detail in the following section. It also is important to remind nominees that a background check and screening will take place in accordance with the synod's governing documents and policies, and an Authorization and Release for Background Check and Screening form will need to be signed at an appropriate time.

E. After the First Ballot

When the ecclesiastical ballot or modified ecclesiastical ballot is utilized, it is important to incorporate sufficient time in the agenda to confirm that nominees are on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church and to provide an easy and expeditious process for allowing nominees to withdraw. This process should involve use of a written form, such as the one provided in the Appendix. If a person is not present at the assembly, the Bishop's Election Committee should, in advance, decide if email or text withdrawals will be accepted. Some synods allow a person to withdraw by telephone when heard by at least two members of the Bishop's Election Committee. The process for withdrawing should not include people going to microphones to withdraw verbally.

The Bishop's Election Committee should be prepared to contact nominees who are not in attendance at the Synod Assembly. If an absent nominee does not desire to withdraw, the nominee should be invited to attend the Synod Assembly and to submit biographical and other information as prescribed in the synod's procedures. If the nominee cannot attend, a representative may be identified to speak on the nominee's behalf or a speaker phone arranged, if these alternatives are authorized by the synod's procedures.

The second ballot for bishop should be scheduled enough time after the report of the first ballot to allow adequate time for withdrawals, contact of absent nominees, and preparation of a new written ballot. In addition, if biographical information will be obtained, it is advisable to distribute forms to nominees on the second ballot in order to save time between the second and third ballots.

F. Subsequent ballots

The process for the second and subsequent ballots is essentially the same as the first ballot, except voting members will vote only for persons whose names appear on the ballot. Thus, after an interim report of the Credentials Committee, the person presiding will

explain the process for that ballot, answer questions, call for a period of silence, either the presider or a prayer team member lead prayer, and call for the balloting. After voting takes place and the ballots are collected, the second (or subsequent) ballot for bishop will be declared closed.

An appropriate time to distribute the *Authorization and Release for Background Check and Screening and the Disclosure Form for Nominees* is before the third ballot when the ecclesiastical ballot is used.

The report of the Elections Committee for ballots subsequent to the first should follow the format described above, except in the case of the final ballot when the total for the runner-up is announced first, followed by the vote total for the person elected. (Sample report forms for subsequent ballots are contained in the Appendix.) Ballots cast should be maintained until the Synod Assembly adjourns, and the report of the Elections Committee should be provided to the secretary for purposes of preparing Synod Assembly minutes.

When biographical and other written information is obtained, it must be carefully reviewed and questions regarding content answered before it is duplicated and distributed. Although speed is always important, fairness requires that the information provided from nominees is comparable and not argumentative and that it is distributed at the same time. It is usually advisable to distribute the biographical material no later than before the third ballot. The more time that is available for voting members to review the biographical and other information the better.

G. Questions to Nominees

Many synods, like the Churchwide Assembly, provide for a question-and-answer period when the number of nominees is reduced following the second ballot. Experience has shown that thoughtful preparation and presentation of the question-and-answer period can be important in the discernment process of electing a bishop.

A key ingredient in a meaningful question-and-answer period is the preparation of questions. Sometimes the Executive Committee or Bishop's Election Committee prepares questions; sometimes questions are solicited from the assembly. Regardless of the mechanism, it is strongly recommended that the questions be reviewed, organized, and edited in advance. This avoids duplication, ensures that questions are intelligible and focused on important issues, and makes the most effective use of time.¹⁷ Questions should also be screened so that they are not argumentative or directed at an issue related to a specific nominee. (Sample questions are provided in the Appendix.) It is also recommended that a neutral person be designated to ask the questions. Ordinarily, this will be the person designated to preside at the election, although it could also be the synod vice president, chair of the Bishop's Election Committee, or other neutral person.

The procedure for asking questions must be carefully considered and the process disseminated in advance. Fairness to the nominees and time management are important

¹⁷ A potential problem exists if questions are prepared by the Executive Committee or other group, and one of the members becomes a nominee. This occurred at a Churchwide Assembly election and resulted in questions being rewritten in order to ensure fairness.

factors. Based on experience, the following are suggestions regarding the question-and-answer process:

1. Exactly the same questions should be asked of each nominee.
2. If the nominees are sequestered, provision should be made to have them move to the dais in a timely manner.
3. Questions should be asked of nominees in a predetermined, rotating order.¹⁸ Thus, the same persons will not answer all questions in the same order.
4. A time limit should be announced and fairly imposed; a 90-second maximum response time works well. (A timekeeper can indicate with a yellow card when 30 seconds remains and a red card when time has expired.)
5. Applause should be withheld until the conclusion of the question-and-answer period, when it should be invited by the chair.

Before the question-and-answer period begins, the person presiding at the election should review the ground rules with the nominees and lead them in prayer.

H. Speeches

Just as the question-and-answer period must be thoughtfully planned and implemented, provision for speeches from nominees must be carefully addressed in advance.

A threshold issue is the timing of the speeches. Some synods have speeches when the number of nominees is seven; others have speeches when the number is three. If nominees are not well known by many voting members, it is generally advisable to allow a larger number of speakers to address the assembly.

Many of the same considerations apply to speeches as to the question-and-answer period. Thus, based on experience, the following suggestions are made for nominee speeches.

1. The ground rules regarding time and content of speeches should be disseminated in advance.
2. The sequence of speeches should be predetermined and established in a random manner.¹⁹
3. A time limit should be announced and fairly imposed; five minutes has worked well in the past. (Again, a timekeeper should be identified who will provide a 30-second warning and indicate when time has expired.)
4. Instruction should be given that there will be no applause after individual speakers; after all speeches are completed, the person presiding at the election will thank and invite applause for all nominees.

¹⁸ An alternative format to a question-and-answer period in a plenary session is to divide the assembly into the same number of groups as number of nominees and to have each nominee rotate from group to group. This allows each nominee to respond to questions without being influenced or affected by prior responses of another.

¹⁹ Some synods sequester nominees so that they cannot hear the presentations of other nominees. Arrangements should be made to have the nominees at the dais in a timely manner.

Again, it is appropriate that the person presiding at the election confer with the speakers in advance to ensure that they understand the ground rules and to lead them in prayer.

I. The Election

When, as the result of any ballot, there is an election, the person reporting for the Elections Committee should advise the person presiding *before* the formal report is made to the assembly. This allows the person presiding time to make several preparatory comments (which also will signal that persons should return to the assembly hall for the announcement). Similarly, if electronic voting is utilized, the results should be provided to the person presiding *before* displaying them to the assembly. The Bishop's Election Committee should check the percentages determined by electronic voting to make sure that an election has taken place.

When there has been an election by the required percentage of the vote, the report of the Elections Committee should announce that fact in advance of the vote totals. Unlike the report on the previous ballots, it is advisable to report vote totals in ascending order so that the last person announced is the person elected. This will facilitate the audience in applauding the results and election at the end of the report and allow the person presiding to declare the person elected as the new bishop.

After the report of the Elections Committee, the person presiding at the election will declare, on the basis of the report, that the person who received the requisite number of votes has been duly elected (or re-elected) bishop of the synod.

After the opportunity for a brief presentation by the person elected, the person presiding (if other than the current bishop) will return the chair to the bishop.

V. **Appendix**

Attached in the Appendix to these *Guidelines* are the following forms and information that may assist in the election process.

- A. Authorization and Release for Background Checks and Screening
- B. Protocol for Churchwide Officer Background Checks and Screening and Disclosure Form
- C. Sample Rules of Organization and Procedure for Synod Assemblies
- D. Sample Biographical Information Form
- E. Sample Ballots for Bishop
- F. Request for Withdrawal from Ballot for Bishop
- G. Sample Reports of Election Results
- H. Sample Questions for Synod Bishop Nominees

APPENDIX

Appendix A: Authorization and Release for Background Checks and Screening

Authorization and Release

I authorize any reference, supervisors, ELCA entity (including congregation, synod, churchwide organization), or any other person or organization to give the _____ (synod) any information (including opinions) regarding my character and fitness for ministry. I also release any individual, employer, reference, synod, congregation, ELCA entity or related organization, institution, organization, or official, or any other person or organization providing information, from any liability for damages of whatever kind or nature that may exist at any time on account of compliance or any attempts to comply with this authorization, excepting only the communication of knowingly false information.

I authorize any prospective employer to conduct reference and background checks and screening, and I agree to supply additional information or consents as requested.

A signed facsimile, electronic version, or photocopy of the Authorization and Release shall be as valid as the original.

Date

Signature

Printed Name

The Authorization and Release form is similar to the version used as part of the mobility forms that rostered ministers complete. It is intended for use by an ELCA congregation or other ELCA entity or related organization that is considering calling a rostered minister.

Most background checks will require a different and more complete form and disclosure of information to be signed by the nominee. Typically, such a form will be provided by the background check company.

Appendix B: Protocol for Churchwide Officer Background Checks and Screening and Disclosure Form

The following is a protocol for implementation of continuing resolution 19.09.B09.

19.09.B09. *Background checks and screening shall be required and completed for persons nominated as churchwide officers prior to their election, if possible, or as soon as practical after their election. The specific procedures and timing of background checks and screening shall be determined by the Church Council.*

General Information for Background Checks for Presiding Bishop, Vice President, and Secretary

1. The Church Council's Executive Committee is responsible for background checks and screening of nominees for the offices of Presiding Bishop, Vice President, and Secretary in churchwide elections. The churchwide executive for Human Resources, or a designee if the executive is unable to serve, shall provide all necessary services related to background checks and screening.
2. Any member of the Church Council's Executive Committee or churchwide staff member who intends to stand for election, or whose name is on the second ballot for an office, shall not participate in any of this background check and screening process (except as a nominee). Any person who is a close relative of a nominee for election shall not be part of the process.¹⁹
3. The Executive Committee, in cooperation with the Secretary, will announce the background check and screening requirements to this church generally and to all voting members in advance of each Churchwide Assembly. The Rules of Organization and Procedure for the Churchwide Assembly will note continuing resolution 19.09.B09. Copies of this protocol will be made available to nominees and other individuals upon request.
4. The Executive Committee will approve forms prepared by Human Resources to be completed by nominees to comply with the background check and screening requirements. These shall include background check authorization and a screening disclosure form. Screening disclosure forms may be modeled upon the Rostered Minister Profile form disclosures.
5. Background checks for nominees may include a criminal check, financial check, driver's license check, and credentials check, and such other checks, and in such jurisdictions, as deemed necessary by the Executive Committee.
6. Best efforts will be made to complete all background checks prior to the officer's election. However, if that is not possible, the election process will not be delayed.
7. This protocol may be amended by the Church Council.

¹⁹ This protocol is intended to handle most conflict-of-interest situations. In the event of other conflicts or the appearance of conflicts, the Executive Committee will take steps to address such concerns.

Procedures for Background Checks for Presiding Bishop, Vice President, and Secretary

1. During the Churchwide Assembly, the Executive Committee will provide background check authorization and disclosure forms to the nominees remaining after the second ballot. There will be a statewide and county criminal search as well as a sex offender registry search. To the extent possible, it will cover seven years. The Executive for Human Resources may use his or her discretion to do a search in an adjoining state to the home address of the person depending on state's proximity and possible previous work location. An Office of Foreign Asset Control (OFAC) list check will be completed.
2. A deadline for return of the forms by the nominees will be set and communicated to each nominee. The Office of the Secretary will provide a biographical information form to be completed by the nominees along with the other forms.
3. The Executive Committee will assign a member to each of the nominees remaining after the second ballot. That member will be responsible for distributing and collecting all the forms and information from the assigned nominee and, as appropriate, providing copies of the materials to the Executive Committee, the Office of the Secretary, and the Executive for Human Resources, or the designee, as specified below.
4. The biographical information form, background check authorization, a screening disclosure form and an envelope for returning the disclosure form will be handed out to the nominees by the Executive Committee member assigned to the nominee. The nominees will complete the forms and return them to the assigned Executive Committee member before the deadline. The background check authorization form will be given immediately to Human Resources in order to do the background checks. The disclosure form will be retained by the Executive for Human Resources, or designee, and kept confidential. The biographical information form will be given to the Office of the Secretary.
5. Upon receipt of the authorization form, Human Resources will promptly complete the specified background checks and keep all results confidential. Human Resources will deliver the completed background check survey along with the disclosure forms to the Executive Committee at a committee meeting held in executive session for that purposed. The results of the background check surveys and disclosure forms will be reviewed promptly by the Executive Committee in that meeting. The committee may confidentially share the information it receives with third parties to seek advice or expertise in their review process.
6. A copy of the nominee's background check survey results will be given to the nominee. That delivery should be done by the assigned committee member in a sealed, confidential envelope. Written instructions should accompany the background checks stating that any error or mistake in the report should be promptly explained by the nominee in writing to the Executive Committee. The written explanation by the nominee should be given to the assigned committee member in a confidential manner for delivery to the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee may seek the assistance of Human Resources to address any report of errors.
7. If necessary, the Executive Committee will meet again to review the background check survey disclosure forms, and nominees' explanations, if any. Concerns with the background check results and disclosure form answers should be raised and discussed with the nominee by the Executive Committee.

8. Notice that background checks and screening have been completed will be announced to the Churchwide Assembly. The Executive Committee will make a decision regarding disclosing any results of the background checks or screening information with the Churchwide Assembly as well. There must be consultation with the nominee before such disclosure occurs.
9. Copies of the background check reports and screening disclosure forms will be handled in a secure manner throughout the process. Human Resources will mark all forms “Confidential” and keep them secure. The information and reports concerning the persons elected to office will be retained in a secure Human Resources file. All other forms and reports will be destroyed.

Procedures for Background Checks for the Treasurer

1. Human Resources will be responsible for conducting a background check and screening disclosure prior to the nomination of an individual for the Office of Treasurer. There will be a credit check completed. There will be a statewide and county criminal search as well as a sex offender registry search. To the extent possible, it will cover seven years. The Executive for Human Resources may use his or her discretion to do a search in an adjoining state to the home address of the person depending on state’s proximity and possible previous work location. An Office of Foreign Asset Control (OFAC) list check will be completed.
2. Human Resources will share results with the Presiding Bishop. The Presiding Bishop may consult with the Secretary and, as appropriate, with the Church Council Executive Committee regarding results and any evaluation. A copy of the background check will be shared with the nominee.
3. Notice that a background check and screening documents have been completed will be shared with the Church Council.
4. Copies of the background check reports and screening disclosure form for the elected Treasurer will be marked “Confidential” and kept in a secure Human Resources file.

This protocol was approved by the Executive Committee of the Church Council on July 27, 2012 [EC12.07.23] for use at the 2013 Churchwide Assembly.

Suggested protocol for review of background check for synod bishop:

1. The Synod Council should develop a written policy on how background checks for synod bishop are received and processed.
2. If the current bishop is a nominee, the synod council should authorize the synod vice president to review the background checks. If the current bishop is not a nominee for re-election, the current bishop could review the background checks.
3. If something is identified in the background checks, the vice president or the bishop should consult with the executive committee of the synod council to determine if the information would disqualify the nominee from serving or is not disqualifying but should be disclosed to the synod or Synod Assembly before voting proceeds or does not rise to the level of disqualification or disclosure. The churchwide office legal team can assist the executive committee with this.

Disclosure Form For Nominees

Out of care for this church, the following questions are asked of all who are making themselves available for election to churchwide office:

1. Have you ever engaged in, been accused of, charged with, or convicted of illegal conduct or a crime, including conduct resulting in suspension or revocation of your driver's license?

☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, please explain on the attached paper.

2. Do you have any health conditions (physical or psychological) or any addictive behavior, including a history of drug, alcohol, or pornographic addictions that might interfere with your ability to serve or continue serving as a leader?

☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, please explain on the attached paper.

3. Have you ever engaged in, been accused of, investigated for, sued, or charged with sexual misconduct, sexual harassment, substance abuse, child or spousal neglect or abuse, or financial improprieties?

☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, please explain on the attached paper.

4. While on the roster, have you ever engaged in, been accused of, investigated for, charged with, or disciplined for any conduct proscribed in *Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline*?

☐ Never Rostered ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please explain on the attached paper.

5. Are you living in accord with *Vision and Expectations* and *Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline* for rostered persons in the ELCA and do you intend to continue to live in compliance?

☐ Never Rostered ☐ Yes ☐ No

If no, please explain on the attached paper.

- ☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, please explain on the attached paper.

Print Name

I have attached___additional page(s). ☐ Yes ☐ No

Please provide as complete an answer as you deem appropriate on this sheet. Please make sure you number your answers to correspond to the questions. If more than one page is needed, please indicate that information is continued on another page.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Please write "Continued" if more pages

Appendix C: Sample Rules of Organization and Procedure for Synod Assemblies

1. Biographical Information: Biographical information on the seven nominees (plus ties) who received the greatest number of votes on the second ballot, submitted on a form determined by the Synod Council, shall be distributed to voting members prior to the casting of the third ballot for bishop.
2. Speeches by Nominees: Prior to the third ballot for bishop, the seven persons (plus ties) who received the greatest number of votes on the second ballot will be invited to address the assembly, with each speech limited to five minutes. If any such person is not present at the assembly, the individual may address the assembly telephonically or may designate an alternate to speak on her or his behalf. A timekeeper shall indicate to the speaker when 30 seconds remain of the allocated time and when the allocated time has elapsed. The sequence of the speeches shall be determined by lot.
3. Questions: Prior to the fourth ballot for bishop, the three persons (plus ties) who received the greatest number of votes on the third ballot will be invited to participate in a question-and-answer period. The period shall be moderated by the person designated to preside at the election. The questions shall be asked in rotating order of the nominees, and the same questions will be asked to each nominee. Each nominee shall have a maximum of 90 seconds to respond to each question. A timekeeper shall indicate to the speaker when 30 seconds remain of the allotted time and when the allotted time has ended. The sequence of the questions to be asked shall be determined by the vice president and secretary of the synod. Questions may be submitted in writing to the secretary, or the secretary's designee, by any voting member of the assembly by (*list date, day, and time certain for the deadline*). The time for the question-and-answer period shall be a maximum of 45 minutes.
4. Election of a Bishop: 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 this election. Upon conclusion of balloting or of specific business related to the election, the bishop shall resume presiding over the assembly.

Appendix D: Sample Biographical Information Form

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION FORM:

NOMINEE FOR BISHOP OF THE _____ (synod)

1. Name: _____
2. Current Position: _____
3. Congregation Membership: _____
4. Date and Year of Birth: _____
5. Date and Year of Ordination: _____
6. Previous Positions: _____

7. Education and Earned Degrees (with institutions and years, most recent first):

8. List up to five (5) current or past synod or churchwide activities that would inform your service as bishop of this synod.

9. List up to five (5) current or past community-related activities that would inform your service as bishop of this synod.

10. What gifts would you bring to the office of bishop of this synod? (1,000 characters maximum)

11. What do you see as the principal challenge to this synod in the next six (6) years, and how would you address it? (1,000 characters maximum)

12. Describe your leadership style. (1,000 characters maximum)

Appendix E: Sample Ballots for Bishop

First Ballot for Bishop of the _____ (synod)

To vote, print the name of a minister of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:

Please identify the current call of the person for whom you are voting.

Where does this person currently live?

(Do not fold your ballot. After voting, turn your ballot upside down and pass it as instructed by the person presiding at the election.)

Second Ballot

for Bishop of the _____ (synod)

(List names in descending order of totals received on first ballot; do not list names of persons who withdrew.)

Third Ballot for Bishop of the _____ (synod)

(List names of seven nominees [in synods where the third ballot is limited to the top seven] in descending order of totals received on second ballot.)

Fourth Ballot for Bishop of the _____(synod)

(List three names in descending order of totals received on third ballot.)

Fifth Ballot
for Bishop of the _____(synod)

(List two names in descending order of totals received on fourth ballot.)

Appendix F

**Request for Withdrawal
from Ballot for Bishop
of the _____(synod)**

I, the Reverend_____, request that my name be
withdrawn from the ballot for bishop of the_____(synod)
of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

(Signed)_____

Date_____

(Submit this form to the secretary of the synod prior to the announced deadline.)

Appendix G: Sample Reports of Election Results

**Report of the First Ballot for Bishop
of the _____ (synod)**

Number of votes cast: XXX

Number of illegal votes cast: X

Number of legal votes cast: XXX

Number of votes needed for election on this ballot (75%): XXX

(List names with vote totals in descending order of totals.)

**Report of the Second Ballot
for Bishop of the _____ (synod)**

Number of votes cast: XXX
Number of illegal votes cast: X
Number of legal votes cast: XXX
Number of votes needed for election on this ballot (75%): XXX

(List names with vote totals in descending order of totals.)

Report of the Third Ballot for Bishop of the _____ (synod)

Number of votes cast: XXX

Number of illegal votes cast: X

Number of legal votes cast: XXX

Number of votes needed for election on this ballot (two-thirds): XXX

(List names in descending order of totals.)

Report of the Fourth Ballot for Bishop of the _____ (synod)

Number of votes cast: XXX

Number of illegal votes cast: X

Number of legal votes cast: XXX

Number of votes needed for election on this ballot (60%): XXX

(List names in descending order of totals.)

Report of the Fifth Ballot for Bishop of the _____ (synod)

Number of votes cast: XXX

Number of illegal votes cast: X

Number of legal votes cast: XXX

Number of votes needed for election on this ballot (majority): XXX

*(List names in ascending order of totals. Be sure to advise the presider of the election results **before** reporting to the assembly.)*

Appendix H: Sample Questions for Synod Bishop Nominees

What do you see as the principal challenge for this synod's bishop in the next six (6) years?

What is your vision for the ministry of this synod in the next six (6) years?

What is your principal priority for this synod and what will you do to address it?

If you could change one thing in the administration or organization of this synod, what would it be?

What gifts will you bring to the office of bishop of this synod?

What experiences in your life have prepared you for the responsibilities of synod bishop?

Describe some of the leadership positions that you have held in the past and how you made a difference in those positions.

As you look at the difficult issues facing this synod and this church, how will you provide leadership to facilitate decision-making to help address them?

One of the strategic directions of the ELCA is to assist members, congregations, synods, institutions, and agencies of this church to grow in evangelical outreach. If you are elected bishop, what ideas do you have to facilitate and motivate evangelical outreach?

The strategic directions of the ELCA include a commitment to be a "public church." What does this mean to you and how would your leadership reflect this commitment?

One of the strategic directions of the ELCA is to deepen and extend global, ecumenical, and interfaith relationships. What steps would you undertake as bishop to advance this strategic goal?

What specific steps will this synod take under your leadership as bishop to identify and develop lay leaders and rostered ministers for the mission and ministry of this church?

Describe specific events or experiences in your life that reflect your commitment to making this church diverse and multicultural.

The office of synod bishop requires significant time away from the synod in leadership throughout this church. Tell us what you have done in the past to balance two very demanding roles.

Tell a story about how God's Word has shaped your life.

Tell us a favorite story about Jesus and how you use in your daily life.

Describe the defining moment in your call to the ministry.



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

EXHIBIT B

Constitutional provisions regarding synods and the role of the synod bishop

ELCA CONSTITUTION

CHAPTER 8. RELATIONSHIPS

- 8.11.** This church shall seek to function as people of God through congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization, all of which shall be interdependent. Each part, while fully the church, recognizes that it is not the whole church and therefore lives in an interdependent relationship with the others.
- 8.13.** The synod shall provide for pastoral care of the congregations, ministers of Word and Sacrament, and ministers of Word and Service within its boundaries. It shall plan for, facilitate, and nurture the life and mission of its people and shall enlarge the ministries and extend the outreach into society on behalf of and in connection with the congregations and the churchwide organization. Conferences, clusters, coalitions, other area subdivisions, or networks shall serve to assist the congregations and synods in exercising their mutual responsibilities.
- 8.16.** In faithful participation in the mission of God in and through this church, congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization—as interdependent expressions of this church—shall be guided by the biblical and confessional commitments of this church. Each shall recognize that mission efforts must be shaped by both local needs and global awareness, by both individual witness and corporate endeavor, and by both distinctly Lutheran emphases and growing ecumenical cooperation.

CONSTITUTION FOR SYNODS

CHAPTER 6. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

- †**S6.01.** The Church is a people created by God in Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit, called and sent to bear witness to God's creative, redeeming, and sanctifying activity in the world.
- †**S6.02.** To participate in God's mission, this synod as a part of the Church shall:
- Proclaim God's saving Gospel of justification by grace for Christ's sake through faith alone, according to the apostolic witness in the Holy Scripture, preserving and transmitting the Gospel faithfully to future generations.
 - Carry out Christ's Great Commission by reaching out to all people to bring them to faith in Christ and by doing all ministry with a global awareness consistent with the understanding of God as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier of all.
 - Serve in response to God's love to meet human needs, caring for the sick and the aged, advocating dignity and justice for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, and standing with the poor and powerless and committing itself to their needs.

- d. Worship God in proclamation of the Word and administration of the sacraments and through lives of prayer, praise, thanksgiving, witness, and service.
- e. Nurture its members in the Word of God so as to grow in faith and hope and love, to see daily life as the primary setting for the exercise of their Christian calling, and to use the gifts of the Spirit for their life together and for their calling in the world.
- f. Manifest the unity given to the people of God by living together in the love of Christ and by joining with other Christians in prayer and action to express and preserve the unity which the Spirit gives.

†S6.03. This synod, in cooperation with the churchwide organization, shall bear primary responsibility for the oversight of the life and mission of this church in its territory. In fulfillment of this role and consistent with policies and procedures of this church, the synod shall:

- a. Provide for pastoral care of congregations and rostered ministers in the synod;
- b. Plan for, facilitate, and nurture the mission of this church through congregations;
- c. Strengthen interdependent relationships among congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization, and foster relationships with agencies and institutions affiliated with or related to this church as well as ecumenical partners; and
- d. Interpret the work of this church to congregations and to the public on the territory of the synod.

†S6.03.01. The responsibilities of the synod include the following:

- a. providing for pastoral care of congregations, ministers of Word and Sacrament, and ministers of Word and Service in the synod, including:
 - 1) approving candidates for the ministry of Word and Sacrament in cooperation with the appropriate seminaries of this church, which may be done through multi-synod committees;
 - 2) authorizing ordinations and ordaining ministers of Word and Sacrament on behalf of this church;
 - 3) approving ministers of Word and Service, which may be done through multi-synod committees;
 - 4) authorizing ordinations and ordaining ministers of Word and Service on behalf of this church; and
 - 5) consulting in the call process for rostered ministers.
- b. providing for leadership recruitment, preparation, and support in accordance with churchwide standards and policies, including:
 - 1) nurturing and supporting congregations and lay leaders;
 - 2) seeking and recruiting qualified candidates for the rostered ministries of this church;
 - 3) making provision for pastoral care, call review, and guidance;
 - 4) encouraging and supporting persons on the rosters of this church in stewardship of their abilities, care of self, and pursuit of continuing education to undergird their effectiveness of service; and
 - 5) supporting recruitment of leaders for this church's colleges, universities, seminaries, and social ministry organizations.
- c. providing for discipline of congregations, ministers of Word and Sacrament, and ministers of Word and Service; as well as for termination of call,

appointment, adjudication, and appeals consistent with Chapter 20 of this church's constitution.

d. providing for archives in conjunction with other synods.

†S6.03.02. In planning for, facilitating, and nurturing the mission of this church through congregations, the responsibilities of the synod include the following:

- a. developing of new ministries, redevelopment of existing ministries, and support and assistance in the conclusion, if necessary, of a particular ministry;
- b. leading and encouraging of congregations in their evangelism efforts;
- c. assisting members of its congregations in carrying out their ministries in the world;
- d. encouraging congregations to respond to human need, work for justice and peace, care for the sick and the suffering, and participate responsibly in society;
- e. providing resources for congregational life; and
- f. grouping congregations in conferences, clusters, coalitions, or other area subdivisions for mission purposes.

†S6.03.03. In strengthening interdependent relationships among congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization, and in fostering relationships with agencies and institutions affiliated with or related to this church as well as with ecumenical partners, the responsibilities of the synod include the following:

- a. promoting interdependent relationships among congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization, and entering into relationships with other synods in the region;
- b. fostering organizations for youth, women, and men, and organizations for language or ethnic communities;
- c. developing relationships with social ministry organizations and ministries, participating in their mission planning, and providing supportive funding;
- d. supporting relationships with and providing supportive funding on behalf of colleges, universities, and campus ministries;
- e. maintaining relationships with and providing supportive funding on behalf of seminaries and continuing education centers;
- f. fostering supporting relationships with camps and other outdoor ministries;
- g. fostering supporting relationships with preschools, elementary schools, and secondary schools operated by congregations of the synod;
- h. fostering relationships with ecumenical and global companions; and
- i. cooperating with other synods and the churchwide organization in creating, using, and supporting regions to carry out those functions of the synod which can best be done cooperatively with other synods and the churchwide organization.

†S6.03.04. In interpreting the work of this church on the territory of the synod, the responsibilities of the synod include the following:

- a. encouraging financial support for the work of this church by individuals and congregations;
- b. participating in churchwide programs;
- c. interpreting social statements in a manner consistent with the interpretation given by the churchwide unit or office which assisted in the development of the statement, and suggestion of social study issues; and
- d. providing ecumenical guidance and encouragement.

CONSTITUTION FOR SYNODS

CHAPTER 8. OFFICERS

- †S8.12. As this synod's pastor, the bishop shall:
- a. Preach, teach, and administer the sacraments in accord with the Confession of Faith of this church.
 - b. Have 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.
 - c. Exercise solely this church's power to ordain (or provide for the ordination by another synod bishop of) approved candidates who have received and accepted a properly issued, duly attested letter of call for the office of ministry of Word and Sacrament (and as provided in the bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America).
 - d. Ordain (or provide for the ordination of) approved candidates who have received and accepted a properly issued, duly attested letter of call for service as ministers of Word and Service of this church.
 - e. Attest letters of call for persons called to serve congregations in the synod, letters of call for persons called by the Synod Council, and letters of call for persons on the rosters of this synod called by the Church Council.
 - f. Install (or provide for the installation of) rostered ministers whose calls the bishop has attested.
 - g. Exercise leadership in the mission of this church and in so doing:
 - 1) interpret and advocate the mission and theology of the whole church;
 - 2) lead in fostering support for and commitment to the mission of this church within this synod;
 - 3) coordinate the use of the resources available to this synod as it seeks to promote the health of this church's life and witness in the areas served by this synod;
 - 4) submit a report to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly concerning the synod's life and work; and
 - 5) advise and counsel this synod's related institutions and organizations.
 - h. Practice leadership in strengthening the unity of the Church and in so doing:
 - 1) exercise oversight of the preaching, teaching, and administration of the sacraments within this synod in accord with the Confession of Faith of this church;
 - 2) be responsible for administering the constitutionally established processes for the resolution of controversies and for the discipline of rostered ministers and congregations of this synod;
 - 3) be the chief ecumenical officer of this synod;
 - 4) be a member of the Conference of Bishops and consult regularly with other synod bishops;
 - 5) foster awareness of other churches throughout the Lutheran world communion and, where appropriate, engage in contact with leaders of those churches;

- 6) cultivate communion in faith and mission with appropriate Christian judicatory leaders functioning within the territory of this synod; and
- 7) be *ex officio* a member of the Churchwide Assembly.
- i. Oversee and administer the work of this synod and in so doing:
 - 1) serve as the president of the synod corporation and be the chief executive and administrative officer of this synod, who is authorized and empowered, in the name of this synod, to sign deeds or other instruments and to affix the seal of this synod;
 - 2) preside 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;
 - 3) ensure that the constitution and bylaws of the synod and of the churchwide organization are duly observed within this synod, and that the actions of the synod in conformity therewith are carried into effect;
 - 4) exercise supervision over the work of the other officers;
 - 5) coordinate the work of all synod staff members;
 - 6) appoint all committees for which provision is not otherwise made;
 - 7) be a member of all committees and any other organizational units of the synod, except as otherwise provided in this constitution;
 - 8) provide for preparation and maintenance of synod rosters containing the 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;
 - 9) annually bring to the attention of the Synod Council the names of all rostered ministers on leave from call or engaged in approved graduate study in conformity with the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of this church and pursuant to prior action of this synod through the Synod Council;
 - 10) provide for prompt reporting to the secretary of this church of:
 - a) additions to and subtractions from the rosters of this synod;
 - b) the issuance of certificates of transfer for rostered ministers in good standing who have received and accepted a properly issued, duly attested, regular letter of call under the jurisdiction of another synod; and
 - c) the entrance of the names of such persons for whom proper certificates of transfer have been received;
 - 11) provide 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
 - 12) appoint a statistician of the synod, who shall secure the parochial 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.



EXHIBIT C

TIMELINE: Synod Bishop Election

The following actions should be taken under the direction and oversight of the Synod Council. Specific responsibilities, as appropriate, may be assigned to a Bishop's Election Committee or other designated group(s).

1 year prior to the Synod Assembly at which a bishop's election will occur: At the Synod Assembly the year before a bishop's election, announce that an election will take place at the next regular meeting and describe the nomination and election processes as provided in the synod's governing documents and procedures. Announce the dates and place of the Synod Assembly. (If this information is not provided at the Synod Assembly, it should be provided as soon as possible in the synod newsletter and posted on the synod's website.)

8-9 months prior to the Synod Assembly:

- Review the applicable governing documents and procedures related to the nomination and election processes. Review *Guidelines for Synod Bishop Elections*.
- Consider how a review of the synod's mission and ministries will take place and schedule conference/cluster meetings or other gatherings, as appropriate.
- Adopt additional policies, as appropriate, and a timeline to implement the provisions of the governing documents and any additional policies.¹
- Identify who will have the responsibility to oversee the nomination and election processes. (This could be addressed by designation of the Executive Committee or appointment of a Bishop's Election Committee.)
- Confer with the churchwide organization (the Office of the Presiding Bishop and the Office of the Secretary) regarding the nomination and election processes.
- Engage the bishop in discussion about her/his discernment process, if the bishop can be re-elected. (This could be addressed by the Mutual Ministry Committee or the Executive Committee.)
- Notify congregations and voting members of approved nomination and election processes. Provide information on the synod's Web site and in the synod newsletter.

6-8 months prior to the Synod Assembly:

- Work with Planning, Research and Evaluation, in the Office of the Presiding Bishop, to gather and analyze appropriate demographic information about the synod.
- Review the synod's strategic and mission plans and goals. Are they currently relevant? How do they intersect and relate to actions of the Churchwide Assembly?
- Coordinate with Planning, Research and Evaluation to develop, distribute, and evaluate a survey regarding the synod's ministry and desired attributes for the synod bishop, if appropriate.
- Engage in conversations at conference/cluster meetings and/or in other venues regarding the synod's mission and ministry and attributes desired in a bishop. Share information and the results of the survey, if available.
- Provide updated information on the synod's Web site and in the synod newsletter.

¹ The governing documents may not address pre-assembly issues relating to ministry review or identifying potential nominees. For example, constitutional provision S9.04 in the *Constitution for Synods* is not mandatory, and it does not address either pre-assembly processes or the process for presentations or questions-and-answers during the Synod Assembly. In the absence of express provisions in the synod's governing documents, a Synod Council can develop procedures that address these issues. For additional discussion of pre-assembly and assembly issues, see the current version of *Guidelines for Synod Bishop Elections*.

5-6 months prior to the Synod Assembly:

- Following consultation with the Synod Council or Executive Committee, implement a plan to advise the synod whether the bishop will allow his/her name to go forward for re-election, if the information is not already available.

3-5 months prior to the Synod Assembly:

- Review and assess status of nomination and election processes.
- Communicate survey findings and results of conference/cluster discussions to congregations and voting members.
- Develop biographical information form and questions to be asked of nominees. (These should include information obtained from the survey and conference/cluster discussions.)
- Work on the agenda for the Synod Assembly, including the bishop election process.
- Consult with the Office of the Presiding Bishop and Office of the Secretary regarding nomination and election processes.
- Provide updated information on the synod's Web site and in the synod newsletter.

2-3 months prior to the Synod Assembly:

- Implement process for identification of potential nominees, if applicable.²
- Provide potential nominees with biographical and other information to be completed prior to the established deadline.
- Review transition information provided by the Office of the Presiding Bishop, as appropriate.
- Ensure that rules of organization and procedure or standing rules for the Synod Assembly are updated and complete.
- Provide updated information on the synod's Web site and in the synod newsletter.

45-60 days prior to the Synod Assembly:

- Nominees submit biographical information and other information to the synod office, if applicable.

30-45 days prior to the Synod Assembly:

- Provide biographical and other information to voting members, if applicable. (This information should be included in the pre-assembly materials and posted on the synod's Website.)
- Analyze registration information to ensure that composition of Synod Assembly is appropriate.
- Provide updated information on the synod's Web site and in the synod newsletter.

14-30 days prior to the Synod Assembly:

- Consult with churchwide representative regarding election process at Synod Assembly.
- Finalize agenda and procedures for election process (including process for background checks, credentials reports, forms of ballots, arrangements for presentations, questions-and-answers, reporting of ballot results, etc.)
- Provide updated information on the synod's Web site and in the synod newsletter.

² Conference/cluster meetings provide an appropriate forum for this process because they both gather leaders together and they facilitate conversation. If conference/cluster meetings will be used for this purpose, it is important that they be widely representative of the synod and that they not give the appearance of a political campaign. The churchwide organization will provide suggested Bible studies, agendas, and discussion topics for these meetings.

**PLANNING, RESEARCH AND EVALUATION REPORTS
AND SURVEYS
for
SYNOD BISHOP ELECTION TOOLKITS**

The Planning, Research and Evaluation team in the Office of the Presiding Bishop will provide each synod holding a bishop election a packet, called “Your Synod at a Glance,” containing a summary of congregation statistics, various trend data, and some demographic data as well other pieces of information. Each of these reports will be synod specific, and synods are encouraged to distribute them widely as part of the discernment process; the packets will be available in early 2020 on Planning, Research and Evaluation’s website (<http://www.ELCA.org/en/Resources/Research-and-Evaluation>), under “Resources, Synod Statistics.” Packets containing 2017 data are currently available; they will be replaced with 2018 updates soon. In addition, upon request, Planning, Research and Evaluation will assist with the preparation and collection of data for a survey or questionnaire. Sample questions are provided; however, synods are encouraged to contact Planning, Research and Evaluation directly to assist with the development of questions. Planning, Research and Evaluation will collect data for the synods, but synods will be responsible for its analysis.

1. Your Synod at a Glance
 - Summary of Form A Report – Includes summary of congregational membership statistics, financial statistics and ethnic membership.
 - Summary of Form C Report – Includes summary of congregational programming for the synod, including curriculum used for education, what assistances are offered to those with disabilities, and ways in which congregations practiced advocacy.
 - Select Congregational Statistics – Includes the size, location, and past attendance data for congregations within the synod.
 - Synod Trend Report - Synod Trend Report showing the baptized membership, average attendance and giving for the synod over the last few years.
 - Size of all ELCA Congregations – Distribution of all ELCA congregations based on average attendance.
 - Congregation Size/Type by Synod – Distribution of congregations by average attendance for each synod.
 - Ethnicity by Synod/Conference – The percentage of people of color within a synod and conference.
 - Congregation Growth/Decline by Synod – Congregations growing, declining, or remaining stable based on changes in average attendance over the last few years by region.
 - Largest Attendance Congregations by Synod – Ranking of congregations based on average attendance.
 - Racially Diverse Congregations by Synod – Congregations showing the most racial/ethnic diversity, especially with congregations with no racial/ethnic community in the majority.
 - Congregations with Most Baptisms by Synod – Ranking of congregations based on child and adult baptisms.

- Synod Demographics – Includes population projections and many characteristics for the synod's territory.
- Age – Chart comparing the age of rostered ministers in the synod to the age of rostered ministers in the ELCA.
- Map – Map of Projected Change in Population by ZIP Code and Change in Average Attendance for the synod.
- Community Context – Community context of congregations in ELCA synods, based on the parochial forms.
- Scatter grams – Trend charts by Total Giving and Worship Attendance showing the change in percent total giving and percent worshipping attendance over several years.
- ELCA Roster – Distribution of Rostered Ministers by Job and Active Status

2. Synod Bishop Election Survey

a. Background and Instruction

Planning, Research and Evaluation will provide each synod with the opportunity to post an online survey. The questionnaire will be available via SurveyMonkey. Promotion of the survey is the responsibility of the synod. Planning, Research and Evaluation does not have the capacity to analyze the responses to the survey, but it will provide the data to the synod for analysis. The online questionnaire can be customized to the needs of the synod but should be limited to 12 or fewer questions. Planning, Research and Evaluation will provide frequencies of responses for closed-response questions and verbatim responses for any open-ended question. Copies of the questions the synod would like to post should be sent to John Hessian at John.Hessian@elca.org who will coordinate the survey for each synod.

Planning, Research and Evaluation recommends the survey be open and available for responding for a minimum of two (2) weeks. Once the survey closes, Planning, Research and Evaluation will provide results in approximately two (2) weeks.

b. Sample Questions

Sample questions for the synod survey might include the following:

1. What three factors most influence what your congregation does and how it does it?
2. What is your primary hope for the future of our congregation?
3. What are your congregation's three greatest strengths?
4. How well does your congregation reach out to people in your community?
5. What can be learned from how your congregation relates to its community?
6. What should congregations in the synod expect of the synod's bishop in the next six years?
7. What should the synod's bishop expect of congregations in the synod in the next six years?
8. What should be the two top priorities of the synod in the next six years?
9. What are your primary hopes for the ELCA as a whole in the next six years?
10. Are you a rostered minister in the synod?
11. How long have you attended an ELCA congregation in the territory of the synod?
12. Have you ever served on the Synod Council or on a committee of the synod?



AGENDA

Conference/Cluster Meetings

A Conversation Regarding the Election of a Synod Bishop

Welcome/Purpose of Gathering

- Introductions
- Agenda and timeline for meeting
- Election of a synod bishop: discernment and call process

Worship and Bible Study/Dwelling in the Word

- Responsive Prayer (ELW p. 328)
- Leading God's People – Part 1
 1. Leader: Exodus 18: 1-12
 2. Table group discussion: Exodus 18: 13-27
 - Discussion questions:
 - What attributes or qualities are needed by God's people?
 - What challenges will leaders face?
 - What is God saying about the gifts needed in a leader?
 3. Reports from table groups and discussion
- Leading God's People – Part 2
 1. Table group discussion:

Each table group will take one of the following passages and discuss the same three questions as above, exploring how the passage further informs and refines the discussion of the Exodus passage.

 - Joshua 1:1-9
 - Matthew 28: 18-20
 - John 20:21-23
 - 1 Corinthians 12:13-14, 27-28
 - 1 Timothy 3:1-7
 - 2 Timothy 1: 13-14
 - Titus 1:7-9
 2. Reports from table groups and discussion

Overview of Bishop Election Process

- Explanation of governing document provisions
- Explanation of timetable, if there will be a pre-assembly nomination process

The Synod We Are

- Overview of Planning, Research and Evaluation reports and data
- What is a synod?
 1. Working definition: “to walk along side” or “to accompany”
 2. ELCA Constitutional provisions
 - ELCA constitutional provisions 8.11, 8.13, 8.16
 - *Constitution for Synods*, Chapter 6
 3. Synod mission statement/strategic plan¹
- Table group discussions
 1. Discussion questions:
 - What are we able to do better as a synod and congregations working together for the sake of Christ’s mission than as individual congregations?
 - Considering the definition and responsibilities of a synod and this synod’s mission statement and strategic plan, what has the synod done well and what has it done not so well in the last six years?
 - What should be the primary priorities for synod ministry in the next six years?
 - What should congregations in the synod expect of the synod’s bishop in the next six years?
 - What should the synod's bishop expect of congregations in the synod in the next six years?
 2. Reports from table groups and discussion

The Bishop We Seek

- Overview of responsibilities of the bishop (+S8.12)
- Table group discussions
 1. Discussion question:
 - In light of the Bible study and discussion today, what are the spiritual gifts and leadership attributes that are the most important for a bishop in this synod in the next six years?
 2. Reports from table groups and discussion

Concluding Comments/Invitation to Congregational Conversations

Closing Prayer

¹ If a synod does not have a mission statement or applicable strategic plan, delete the references that do not apply and modify the discussion questions accordingly.



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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EXHIBIT F

Prayer Resources for Synods Preparing for Bishop Elections

Electing a bishop is one of the most important responsibilities in the life of a synod in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and a key responsibility of the Synod Assembly. As an election, it is a process governed by the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of the synod; however, it is also a call process. As such, it involves discernment, from the perspective both of individual potential nominees and of the synod as a whole. Thus, engaging in prayerful reflection and seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit are indispensable aspects of the process of nomination and election, regardless of the particular provisions in the synod's governing documents. The resources and prayers offered here may be used by individuals, congregations and gatherings in synods that are preparing to call a bishop.

Responsive Prayer

The prayer may begin with singing "Come and Fill Our Hearts" (528) or another appropriate song or psalm.

The leader begins the dialogue

Come, Holy Spirit!

Come, Holy Spirit!

Come, breath of God and fill the minds and hearts of your people.

Come, Holy Spirit!

Come, fire of truth and kindle in us the flame of your love.

Come, Holy Spirit!

Come, font of wisdom, enlighten us and give us counsel and insight.

Come, Holy Spirit!

Come, leading spirit and guide our discerning.

Come, Holy Spirit!

Come, Holy Spirit!

Holy Spirit, come!

Silence

The leader concludes the silence with the following prayer.

Almighty God, you have given your Holy Spirit to the church to lead us into all truth.

Bless with the Spirit's grace and presence the people of this synod (*name*) as we prepare to elect a bishop. Keep us steadfast in faith and united in love, that we may manifest your glory and prepare for the way of your kingdom; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

Prayers

The Church

Gracious Father, we pray for your holy catholic church. Fill it with all truth and peace. Where it is corrupt, purify it; where it is in error, direct it; where in anything it is amiss, reform it; where it is right, strengthen it; where it is in need, provide for it; where it is divided, reunite it; for the sake of Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord.

The Church

Almighty God, grant to your church your Holy Spirit and the wisdom which comes down from heaven, that your word may not be bound but have free course and be preached to the joy and edifying of Christ's holy people, that in steadfast faith we may serve you and in the confession of your name abide to the end; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Church Unity

Most high and holy God, pour out upon us your one and unifying Spirit, and awaken in every confession of the whole church a holy hunger and thirst for unity in you; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Enlightenment of the Holy Spirit

God Almighty, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ: Grant us, we pray, to be grounded and settled in your truth by the coming of the Holy Spirit into our hearts. That which we know not, reveal; that which is wanting in us, fill up; that which we know, confirm; and keep us blameless in your service; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

O God, through water and the Holy Spirit you give us new birth, cleanse us from sin, and raise us to eternal life. Stir up in your people the gift of your Holy Spirit: the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord, the spirit of joy in your presence, both now and forever.

Those discerning a call

Almighty God, by the power of the Spirit you have knit your servants into the one body of your Son, Jesus Christ. Look with favor upon them as they discern a new call in Christ's name. Give them courage, patience, and vision; and strengthen us all in our Christian vocation of witness to the world and of service to others; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Voting members

Almighty God, giver of all good gifts, look on your church with grace and guide the minds of those who shall choose the bishop of this synod (*name*), that we may receive a faithful servant who will care for your people and equip us for our ministries; through Jesus Christ our Lord.¹

¹ From "Choosing a Bishop: Questions to Assist in Preparation," authorized and commended for use by The Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 1994.

Guidance

O God, you have called your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Scripture Readings

Exodus 3:1-12	<i>God calls Moses</i>
Numbers 27:12-23	<i>God's choice of Joshua</i>
1 Samuel 3	<i>God speaks to Samuel</i>
1 Samuel 16:1-13	<i>David anointed by Samuel</i>
Psalms 104:24-34, 35b	<i>Send forth your Spirit and renew the face of the earth (30)</i>
Psalms 139:1-18, 23-24	<i>Lord, you have searched me out; O Lord you know me. (1)</i>
Luke 5:1-11	<i>Jesus Calls the first Disciples</i>
Acts 1:15-26	<i>Matthias added to the disciples</i>
Acts 2:1-12	<i>Filled with the Spirit</i>
Romans 8:22-27	<i>Praying with the Spirit</i>
Ephesians 6:18-20	<i>Praying in the Spirit</i>
Jude 1:20-22	<i>Praying in the Spirit</i>

Hymns and Songs

178*	Hear Our Prayer
179	O Lord, Hear Our Prayer
180	The Spirit Intercedes for Us
395	Come, Holy Ghost, God and Lord
401	Gracious Spirit, Heed Our Pleading
403	Like the Murmur of the Dove's Song
406	Veni Sancte Spiritus <i>Holy Spirit, Come to Us</i>
407	O Living Breath of God <i>Soplo de Dios viviente</i>
528	Come and Fill Our Hearts <i>Confitemini Domino</i>
577, 578	Creator Spirit, Heavenly Dove
743	Now to the Holy Spirit Let Us Pray
751	O Lord, Hear My Prayer
752	Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying

* Numbers correspond to *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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EXHIBIT G

SYNOD TRANSITION CHECKLIST

From the moment a synod bishop announces her or his intention to leave office in order to retire or to accept another call, or from the time of an unexpected resignation, incapacity to serve, or death, the synod will experience a season of significant transition. Many persons, as well as other expressions of this church and related organizations, are affected by this event. As in all times of change, leaders who develop and implement a transition plan can help make this an opportunity for growth and positive forward movement in the synod's mission. The following checklist is provided to assist synod officers, staff, council members, and other leaders, working with the outgoing bishop, to prepare for this significant time of change in the synod's life. Synod leaders are encouraged to contact partners in the churchwide organization who may be able to provide assistance. In particular, the Office of the Presiding Bishop, especially the synod relations staff, and the Office of the Secretary can provide helpful assistance. In addition, consultation with leaders from other synods who have gone through similar transitions may be useful.

Transition and Closure with the Outgoing Bishop

- When a synod bishop discerns that she or he will not continue to serve, that bishop should promptly notify the Presiding Bishop and the executive for the Conference of Bishops, as well as the executive committee of the synod. The verbal notification should be followed by a written communication. (In the event of a death or unexpected resignation, the Presiding Bishop, executive for the Conference of Bishops, and the executive committee of the synod should be promptly notified.)
Upon the death or resignation of a bishop, or if a bishop is unable to serve, the vice president of the
- synod shall convene the Synod Council to arrange for the appropriate care of the responsibilities of the bishop until an election of a new bishop is held or, in the case of temporary disability, until the bishop is able to serve again. See †S8.54 in the *Constitution for Synods*. In addressing these issues, the vice president and synod leadership will consult with the Office of the Presiding Bishop.
- In appropriate circumstances, the Synod Council, in consultation with the Office of the Presiding Bishop, may appoint an interim bishop.
- The Synod Council will coordinate notification to rostered leaders, congregations, and others in the synod.
- The Synod Council will review the status of all synod staff, including the evaluation of any co-terminus calls. The Synod Council should consult with the bishop-elect on issues related to synod staff. If some staff will be terminated or if staffing patterns will change, plans should be developed, implemented, and communicated, as appropriate.
- The Synod Council will conduct an "exit interview" with the outgoing bishop and any staff that will be leaving. The outgoing bishop's exit interview should be accomplished in coordination with the Office of the Presiding Bishop.
- The Synod Council will be responsible for planning a farewell and appreciation event for the outgoing bishop, if one will take place.
- The outgoing bishop and staff and the secretary of the synod, as appropriate, will work on file and document transition, in accordance with the records management policies of this church. Documents of historical value will be sent to the archives. If issues arise regarding the sensitive nature of some documents, questions should be addressed to the Office of the Secretary.

- Synod staff should compile a transition manual containing forms for correspondence, information on routine procedures, calendar information regarding upcoming and recurrent events, contact information, identification of key resources, etc.
- Signature authorizations on synod accounts should be changed.
- The outgoing bishop and the incoming bishop or interim bishop should confer on important and sensitive issues, if possible.

Preparation for a Bishop Election

- The Synod Council should review its processes for nominating and electing a bishop (in Chapter 9 of the *Constitution for Synods*) and the “Guidelines for Synod Bishop Elections,” and it should designate the person(s) responsible for planning and coordinating the election process.
- Synod officers and those responsible for the bishop election process will confer with the Office of the Presiding Bishop and Office of the Secretary.
- If a special Synod Assembly will be called, the Synod Council will coordinate with the Office of the Presiding Bishop in setting the date and will notify voting members, other rostered ministers, congregations, and others. (Notification must comply with governing documents and state law.)
- The Synod Council will set the tentative date for the new bishop’s installation, in consultation with the Office of the Presiding Bishop, and will make advance site reservations, as required. (In accordance with †S8.15, the Presiding Bishop or his or her appointee shall install each newly elected synod bishop.)
- The persons designated by the Synod Council as responsible for the election will confer with representatives of the Office of the Presiding Bishop and the Office of the Secretary to address the issues discussed in the “Guidelines for Synod Bishop Elections.”
- The Synod Council will address possible transition issues and specify the time when the new bishop will begin to serve. (Note that provision S8.52., a non-required provision in the *Constitution for Synods*, authorizes the Synod Council in special circumstances to designate when the term will begin.)

New Bishop Assumes Office

- A letter of call to the new bishop is prepared by the Office of the Secretary.
- The Synod Council confers with the bishop-elect and Office of the Presiding Bishop, confirming plans for the installation.
- The bishop-elect and outgoing bishop should confer regarding matters of pastoral care and synod administration.
- The bishop-elect will confer with the Office of the Presiding Bishop on matters related to staffing, strategic planning, scheduling of upcoming events, and other matters.
- The bishop-elect should confer with her or his mentor bishop (assigned by the Conference of Bishops) and participate in orientation for new bishops, as arranged by the Conference of Bishops and the churchwide organization.
- The bishop-elect should review recent minutes of the Synod Council and Conference of Bishops, as appropriate.
- The bishop-elect should give careful attention to selecting a staff. (Note that calls for rostered ministers to serve as bishop assistants or associates are issued by the Synod Council; calls for Directors of Evangelical Mission are issued by the Church Council, upon recommendation by the Domestic Mission unit of the churchwide organization and consultation with the synod.)



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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EXHIBIT H

**Affirmation of Ministry
at the
Re-election of a Synod Bishop**

This order is intended for use when a bishop of a synod is re-elected and is meant to be used during the synod assembly. When possible, this rite is set within Holy Communion and precedes the prayers of intercession. This rite may be used by itself when circumstances do not allow for the affirmation to take place during Holy Communion. The Vice President of the synod and/or the churchwide representative leads the rite.

Leader When a synod bishop is newly elected, a
service of installation is planned
and takes place at a time after the assembly.
At this assembly we reelected our bishop
and now we affirm *him/her* in *his/her* call.

name has been reelected
to serve a six-year term
in the office of bishop in synod name
of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

The prophet Isaiah writes,
“How beautiful upon the mountains
are the feet of the messenger
who announces peace,
who brings good news,
who announces salvation,
who says to Zion, ‘Your God reigns.’”

Bishop name,
when you were first installed
you promised to discharge your duties
in accordance with the Holy Scriptures
and the Confessions of the Lutheran Church.
You promised to be diligent
in your study of the Bible
and in your use of the means of grace.
You promised to give faithful witness in the world,
that God’s love may be known.

**You promised to guide, encourage
and support the people of this synod
in their varied ministries and the ministries of the
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.**

**Now, this synod, gathered here in assembly,
has renewed your call to this ministry.**

**Will you renew your efforts
to keep the promises you have made,
striving to fulfill all of the duties,
responsibilities, and obligations
of your office as bishop of this synod?**

The bishop responds:

I will, and I ask God to help me.

**And you, people of God,
will you continue to receive first name ,
as a servant of God and a shepherd
in Christ's Church?**

**Will you pray for *him/her*, help and honor *him/her*
for *his/her* work's sake,
and in all things strive to live together
in the peace and unity of Christ?
If so, answer "We will."**

The assembly responds:

We will.

Let us pray. . . *brief pause* . . .

**Ever-living God,
strengthen and sustain, first name ,
that with patience and understanding
he/she may love and care for your people.
Give *him/her* the courage and the compassion
to do the things you have called *him/her* to do.
Surround *him/her* with your love
and uphold those who love and care for *him/her*.
Grant that together, we may all follow
in the way of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever. Amen.**

*When set within Holy Communion the service continues with the prayers of
intercession.*

*When the order is used at another time the assembly may sing a song or join in
another acclamation of thanksgiving.*

2018-2021 Schedule of Bishop Elections

EXHIBIT I

2018					
SYNOD	BISHOP	ASSEMBLY DATES	ELIGIBLE FOR RE-ELECTION	STATUS	NEW BISHOP
1A Alaska	Shelley Wickstrom	April 26-28	Yes	Re-elected	
2D Grand Canyon	Interim Lowell Almen	June 14-16	End of Interim		Deborah Hutterer
2E Rocky Mountain	James Gonia	May 3-5	Yes	Re-elected	
3G Minneapolis Area	Ann Svennungsen	May 4-5	Yes	Re-elected	
4A Nebraska	Brian Maas	May 31-June 2	Yes	Re-elected	
4E Southwestern Texas	Ray Tiemann	May 4-6	Retiring		Sue Briner
5H Northwest Synod of Wisconsin	Richard Hoyme	June 2-3	Retiring		Laurie Skow-Anderson
5K South-Central Synod of Wisconsin	Mary Froiland	May 4-6	Retiring		Viviane Thomas-Breitfield
7B New England	James Hazelwood	June 7-9	Yes	Re-elected	
7F Southeastern Pennsylvania	Claire Burkat	May 3-5	Retiring		Patricia Davenport
9F Caribbean	Felipe Lozada-Montanez	June 15-16	Retiring		Idalia Negron

2019					
SYNOD	BISHOP	ASSEMBLY DATES	ELIGIBLE FOR RE-ELECTION	STATUS	NEW BISHOP
1B Northwest Washington	B. Kirby Unti	May 16-19	Retiring		Shelley Bryan Wee
1C Southwestern Washington	Richard Jaech	June 7-8	Yes	Re-elected	
1E Oregon	David Brauer-Rieke	May 10-12	Yes		Laurie Larson Caesar
1F Montana	Jessica Crist	May 31-June 2	Retiring		Laurie Jungling
2B Southwest California	R. Guy Erwin	May 31-June 1	Yes	Re-elected	
3C South Dakota	David Zellmer	May 30-June 1	Retiring		Constanze Hagmaier
3D Northwestern Minnesota	Larry Wohlrabe	June 7-9	Retiring		William Tesch
3I Southeastern Minnesota	Steven Delzer	May 31-June 1	Retiring		Regina Hassanally
4B Central States	Roger Gustafson	June 6-8	Yes		Susan Candea
4F Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast	Michael Rinehart	May 17-18	Yes	Re-elected	
5A Metro Chicago	Wayne Miller	June 6-8	Retiring		Yehiel Curry
5E Western Iowa	Rodger Prois	May 3-5	Yes		Lorna Halaas
6B North/West Lower Michigan	Craig Satterlee	May 16-18	Yes	Re-elected	
6F Southern Ohio	Suzanne Dillahun	June 7-8	Yes	Re-elected	
7A New Jersey	Trace Bartholomew	June 6-8	Yes	Re-elected	
7C Metro New York	Interim Donald McCoid	May 16-18	End of Interim		Paul Egensteiner
8A Northwestern Pennsylvania	Ralph Jones	June 13-15	Retiring		Michael Lozano
8B Southwestern Pennsylvania	Kurt Kusserow	June 13-15	Yes	Re-elected	
8D Lower Susquehanna	James Dunlop	June 6-8	Yes	Re-elected	
8G Metro Washington DC	Richard Graham	June 14-15	Retiring		Leila Ortiz
9D Southeastern	H. Julian Gordy	May 17-19	Retiring		Kevin Strickland

2020

SYNOD	BISHOP	ASSEMBLY DATES	ELIGIBLE FOR RE-ELECTION	STATUS	COMMENTS
2A Sierra Pacific	Mark Holmrud				
3A Western North Dakota	Mark Narum				
3B Eastern North Dakota	Terry Brandt				
3E Northeastern Minnesota	Thomas Aiken				
3H St. Paul Area	Patricia Lull				
5D Southeastern Iowa	Michael Burk				
5F Northeastern Iowa	Steven Ullestad				
5L LaCrosse Area	James Arends				
6E Northeastern Ohio	Abraham Allende				
7D Upstate New York	John Macholtz				
7E Northeastern Pennsylvania	Samuel Zeiser				
7G Slovak Zion	Wilma Kucharek				
8C Allegheny	Michael Rhyne				
9C South Carolina	Herman Yoos				

2021

SYNOD	BISHOP	ASSEMBLY DATES	ELIGIBLE FOR RE-ELECTION	STATUS	COMMENTS
3F Southwestern Minnesota	Jon V. Anderson				
8H West Virginia-Western Maryland	Matthew L. Riegel				
9B North Carolina	Tim M. Smith				



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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THE OFFICE AND MINISTRY OF THE BISHOP IN THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA *A Shared Vision of Episcopacy and a Relational Agreement*

PREAMBLE

The office of bishop has developed, been reformed, and locally adapted for the sake of the Church over many centuries. As ministers of the Gospel and in keeping with Scriptural, confessional, and the constitutional principles of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, we pledge to fulfill faithfully our responsibilities within the office of bishop. As this church and the world move into the twenty-first century and third millennium of Christian witness, our vision of the office is summarized in the following four-fold description:

THE OFFICE OF THE BISHOP WITHIN THE OFFICE OF MINISTRY

As a priesthood of believers, all baptized Christians are called to serve in the name of Christ. Some also are called and ordained for the ministry of Word and Sacrament, an office given by God for the sake of the Church. The ministry of Word and Sacrament is centered in the proclamation of the Word of God and the administration of the Holy Sacraments. This ministry embraces both the ministry of pastor within and for a local community of believers and of bishop within and for a communion of local communities" (*The Lutheran Understanding of Ministry*, Lutheran World Federation 1983). The ministry of bishops is understood as an expression of the pastoral ministry. Describing the office of the synodical bishop as the *synod's pastor*, roots this ministry most deeply in its pastoral understanding.

THE OFFICE OF THE BISHOP WITHIN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH

"Each bishop shall give leadership for ordained (Word and Sacrament ministry) and other ministries; shall give leadership to the mission of this church; shall give leadership in strengthening the unity of the church; and shall provide administrative oversight" (ELCA Study of Ministry: *Together for Ministry*, 1993). In exercising this leadership, the bishop is to give attention to four tasks:

- 1) to preach and teach the apostolic faith of the Church;
- 2) to provide for Word and Sacrament ministry within the territory of the bishop's ministry, including the Church's power to ordain;
- 3) to oversee the work of the Church's mission within the territory of the bishop's ministry; and
- 4) to give witness to the unity of the Church.

This church's understanding of the apostolic faith, and the Creeds and Confessions that give witness to it, are described in its constitutions under the chapter title "Confession of Faith."

THE OFFICE OF THE BISHOP WITHIN THE NATURE AND ORGANIZATION OF THIS CHURCH

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America understands itself to be one church in three expressions: congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization. Each expression is fully the church, but not, by itself, the whole Church. These expressions work interdependently, rather than hierarchically. The ministry of bishops is to exemplify this understanding of interdependence. Bishops are accountable to the Gospel. Bishops also are accountable to those among whom they serve, to one another, and to this entire church. As individuals and as a conference, the bishops provide counsel to this church. In their public ministries, bishops draw attention to needs that must be addressed in Church and society.

THE OFFICE OF THE BISHOP WITHIN A CULTURE OF DIVERSITY AND CHANGE

In serving the Gospel, the ministry of the bishop serves the Church. Because the Church is called and gathered by the Holy Spirit in a wide variety of settings and circumstances, it is useful and even necessary for there to be a

variety of gifts and styles of ministry exercised by those called to serve as bishops. Flexibility and adaptability — according to the mission needs of this church, but always within the confessional and constitutional understandings of this church and the collegial agreements of the Conference of Bishops — are both honored and encouraged. Emphasis on the servant nature of this ministry provides the consistency of purpose within the diversity of practice.

We view these understandings to be normative for our life and work together as bishops. They represent our collegial intentions. They presume that neither ecumenical agreements, nor the participation of this church in conciliar movements or organizations with churches that hold differing views of episcopacy, alter these understandings in any essential way.

This relational agreement regarding the responsibilities of the synodical bishops of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the relationships between and among them has been approved by them for their own advice and use.

I. RESPONSIBILITIES

For the purpose of this document, it is appropriate to summarize the responsibilities of synodical bishops as defined in the churchwide constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (10.31.a.). Their responsibilities as elected leaders of their synods include:

A. WORSHIP AND SPIRITUAL OVERSIGHT

The synodical bishop, as the synod's pastor, regularly leads worship in congregations and in other gatherings of this church and, through a variety of activities and contacts, teaches the Christian faith, and provides spiritual leadership and oversight in the synod.

B. PASTORAL CARE

The synodical bishop, as the synod's pastor 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" (§8.12.b.).

C. MISSION PLANNING

As the chief executive of the synod responsible for the oversight of its life and work, the bishop is the chief planner for its life and mission, giving ongoing attention to the use of all its resources.

D. MISSION INTERPRETATION

The bishop is the primary spokesperson for the synod in respect to its mission, theology, and life, both internally and externally. It is understood that others may be given specific interpretative assignments.

E. MISSION ADMINISTRATION

Bishops also are the chief corporate and executive officers of their synods. In order to give fuller attention to other aspects of their responsibilities, it is understood that they often will exercise this leadership by delegating major administrative tasks to others who are accountable to them.

F. ECUMENICAL RELATIONS

Bishops are the chief ecumenical officers of their synods and are a sign of the unity of the Church, between their respective synods and other denominational families and ecumenical organizations. It is understood that bishops may name other persons to assist them in maintaining contacts and in carrying out specific ecumenical and interreligious tasks.

G. LIAISON

Synodical bishops, by virtue of their office, have high visibility across this whole church. Their contacts with each other and with the churchwide units, organizations, agencies, and institutions of this church form a vital network marked by collegiality. Through this network the bishops together support this church's

cohesiveness and public witness to the mission of the Church in service to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This relational agreement among bishops of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is designed to assist the bishops in their collegial relationships and contacts with one another in support of that witness.

II. PRINCIPLES

Given the collegial nature of the responsibilities of the synodical bishops, it is appropriate to identify certain principles that govern those relationships.

A. AUTHORITY

"This church recognizes that all power and authority in the Church belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ, its head. Therefore, all actions of this church...shall be carried out under his rule and authority..." (ELCA churchwide constitutional provision 5.01.). Bishops are accountable to the Lord Jesus Christ, the whole Church, and to this church in the exercise of their ministries.

B. GRACE

All humans sin and fall short of the glory of God but by God's grace may be empowered to walk in newness of life. Bishops recognize the reality of sin and power of redemption both for themselves and for those whom they serve.

C. WORTHINESS

Bishops recognize that leadership in the community of Christ carries with it the responsibility to represent the community faithfully (ELCA churchwide constitutional provision 7.22.). By the grace of God bishops seek to live and act in a manner consistent with the Church's confession of Christ.

D. MERCY AND JUSTICE

Bishops recognize their pastoral responsibility both to admonish and to support those whose circumstances in life require special care.

E. INTERDEPENDENCE

The constitution and polity of the ELCA envision this church as being composed of interdependent expressions, each with its own integrity (ELCA churchwide constitutional provisions 5.01.c. and 8.11.). Bishops recognize and support this principle.

F. INCLUSIVENESS

Consistent with the ELCA's commitment to be an inclusive church in the midst of the divisions in society (ELCA churchwide constitutional provision 5.01.b.), bishops assist this church in fulfilling that commitment through their relationships and activities.

G. VARIETY OF PRACTICE

In view of the interdependence of the various expressions of the ELCA, this church recognizes that decisions are to be made principally by the entity most directly affected (ELCA churchwide constitutional provision 5.01.c.). This implies that some variety of practice will develop with integrity across this church. Bishops respect this variety.

H. COMMUNICATION

Consistent with the interdependence and integrity of this church's various expressions and of its variety in practice, bishops communicate with appropriate other bishops when dealing in their role as bishop with persons on the roster of another synod or with a congregation, an agency, or an institution beyond their own synod. Whenever possible, this communication should be done prior to any contact with a person rostered in another synod.

I. LEADERSHIP NEEDS

The geographic, ethnic, and social diversity of this church means that leadership needs are equally diverse and never uniform in opportunity from synod to synod. In working with rostered leaders and candidates,

bishops consider persons focusing primarily upon the needs of this church for specific leadership, while also providing opportunity for individual preferences to be expressed and considered.

J. SERVICE

Inherent in the work of a bishop is the opportunity to gain a broader view of the needs of this church and of its public leaders. Informed by this broader view, bishops strive to deal with all candidates, rostered persons, congregations, institutions, and agencies.

K. CONFIDENTIALITY

The constitution of this church acknowledges and obligates all ordained ministers to the historic discipline of confidentiality in the exercise of the pastoral office (ELCA churchwide constitutional provision 7.45.). Bishops respect this discipline and practice in conferring with each other, seeking when appropriate the permission of the person involved before sharing confidential information with another bishop. Bishops also participate in a confidential listserv which provides a platform for sharing information that may be of benefit to all members of the conference of bishops. As a matter of courtesy, personal responses intended for a particular bishop are sent directly to the intended recipient rather than as a reply to the listserv.

L. COLLEGIALLY AND SUPPORT

Because of the nature of their responsibilities and opportunities in the Church's mission and ministry, synodical bishops work collegially together and provide personal and pastoral support to each other in the spirit of mutual accountability.

III. APPLICATIONS

The following applications are illustrative of the above principles:

A. PREACHING AND TEACHING

Before accepting any invitation to preside over any worship setting, or to be a preaching or teaching theologian in a place outside of one's synodical jurisdiction, bishops will confer with the bishop of the inviting synod, and they will honor that bishop's wishes regarding such an invitation. When serving on the governing board of an educational institution of this church, conferring with the synodical bishop about visits to the institution, meetings, and responsibilities related to board service is not always necessary.

B. WORD AND SACRAMENT MINISTRY

1. Candidacy

- a. Bishops recognize that the ongoing commitment of the ELCA to receive new members who are persons of color or persons whose primary language is other than English requires careful and constant focus in all aspects of the life of the synods. One aspect to which bishops give particular attention in respect to this goal is the development of current and future leaders of this church. Therefore, synodical bishops work regularly with committees, institutions, and other entities in order to develop the leadership of such persons.
- b. Synodical bishops exercise caution and selectivity for the sake of this church when responding to ordained ministers and others outside the ELCA for admission to the official rosters of this church.
- c. Synodical bishops recognize the necessity of receiving and sharing all pertinent information concerning applicants and candidates in order to assist in the full and forthright discernment of gifts for and impediments to rostered ministry.

2. First Call and Ordination

- a. In order to meet the full range of needs in the ELCA for rostered persons, synodical bishops seek to be sensitive to the needs in less popular locations and areas of the nation when determining synodical and regional assignment and reassignment.
- b. In dealing with first calls, bishops make judgments fairly and evenhandedly considering the following:
 - 1) Assessing the particular needs and opportunities in a ministry setting.

- 2) Assessing the skills, resources, and capacities of individual candidates for particular ministries.
- 3) Considering the preferences and restrictions of individual candidates.
- 4) Examining the priorities and preferences of the congregation or other entity involved in the call or employment.
- c. When a candidate has been assigned to a synod, the bishop will make prompt and regular contact with the candidate.
- d. Bishops will not condone or support any attempts to arrange conversations or negotiations between candidates and congregations or other entities involved in calls or employment prior to the formal assignment of the candidate to the synod.
- e. Bishops will not condone or support attempts by candidates, congregations, or calling entities to consider a candidate outside of the synod of assignment without the consent of the synodical bishop of assignment.
- f. The bishops involved must approve the reassignment of a candidate from one synod to another. They will consult with the staff person in the Churchwide Organization, who is responsible for the reassignment, before the staff acts on such requests by candidates.
- g. By mutual agreement between the two bishops, a candidate assigned to one synod may be considered in another synod without reassignment after the candidate has been made available to other synods in the region of assignment. Responsibility for the candidate rests with the synod of assignment. Such a "contingency assignment" should be communicated in writing to the appropriate person in the Churchwide Organization.
- h. On behalf of this church, the bishop ordains (or provides for the ordination of) candidates. Ordinations are arranged and conducted consistent with the policy and practice of the synod whose bishop authorizes them. When the ordination takes place in another synod, however, all bishops involved must be in conversation. A bishop who conducts or authorizes an ordination in another synod will consult with and obtain the approval of that bishop prior to any planning for the ordination.

See also ELCA bylaw 7.31.07.

3. Mobility and Call Process

- a. The practices of bishops differ in nominating candidates to congregations, agencies, and institutions both in respect to the number of persons nominated and the number of nominations a candidate may have simultaneously. Synodical bishops respect these differing practices and keep one another appropriately informed.
- b. Both in establishing policy for the nomination of persons for call and in actual nominations, bishops are aware that some persons face particular challenges with regard to placement. These societally informed challenges may change over time. Bishops give particular attention to persons who experience difficulty because of prevailing challenges.
- c. Bishops cannot assure any candidate of a call since this church has not made that commitment. However, bishops may provide the opportunity for candidates to be considered by appropriate congregations as calling or employing agencies.
- d. Bishops include a Confidential Information form with Rostered Minister Profiles when they are posted/shared.
- e. Bishops consult with the bishop of the synod where a minister is rostered prior to that rostered minister being considered for call by a search committee. When approached by another synod which is seeking to contact a rostered person regarding a prospective call, a bishop shall be mindful that rostered persons belong to the whole ELCA and not just the particular synod in which they currently serve. Requesting that another bishop refrain from contacting the rostered person will be based upon the same criteria a bishop would use when discouraging a rostered person's name from being considered by a congregation in the synod the bishop serves: e.g., premature interruption of present ministry (normally not less than three years), known personal or family circumstances that preclude a move at the present time. Recognizing the needs of this whole church for experienced

rostered ministers, bishops will seek to avoid “keeping” an individual who is open to serve where needed. The bishop of the synod of roster may inform another bishop of a rostered person’s stated desire to remain in that synod; also, other preferences and special circumstances may be communicated confidentially bishop-to-bishop. In general, however, encouragement to explore with a rostered person her or his openness to be considered by a specific calling congregation will be granted absent compelling reasons to deny clearance. Many bishops delegate to a staff member the responsibility to communicate with other synods concerning mobility and call of rostered persons.

- f. Bishops always are building relationships with one another. Critical to this process is the expectation that bishops will be consistently candid and sufficient in recommending a candidate to another bishop. A test of the necessity of sharing information with another bishop is: “What information would be helpful to me in consideration of the recommendation of a candidate for call?” Doubt about whether certain information should be shared will normally be decided in favor of disclosure.
- g. Bishops always are building relationships with parish pastors, churchwide partners, and with agencies and institutions of this church. Through these relationships they are assisted in the critical task of making personnel recommendations.
- h. Letters of Call are attested by bishops (§8.12.e. in the *Constitution for Synods*). This is required for the issuance of a regular, recognized Letter of Call in this church. As the note on the form indicates, such attestation signifies that the call has been properly extended and that the stated terms are accurate. Letters of Call also are attested by the bishop, assuring that the conditions of service are consonant with ELCA documents. In both cases, attestation means that the person has been properly called. It does not imply approval of the “match” between the person and the position.
- i. When a local search committee approaches a bishop other than its own in respect to candidates, that bishop will respond by asking the committee to route its request through its own bishop.
- j. When a local search committee from another synod asks a bishop for an evaluation concerning an identified candidate known to that bishop, that bishop may provide such an evaluation, informing the bishop of the synod to which the committee is related of the evaluation.

4. Synodically Authorized Ministers

Bishops will act within the stated parameters of the *Manual of Policies and Procedures for Management of the Rosters* when authorizing for Word and Sacrament ministry those persons who are not on this church’s roster of Word and Sacrament Ministers.

C. OVERSIGHT OF MISSION

1. Servanthood

Since servanthood in behalf of the Gospel is a mark of the Christian life and therefore of the Church’s public forms of ministry, synodical bishops do not equate success with specific titles, compensation, responsibility, or location in ministry for themselves or others.

2. Funding the Mission

As the synod’s pastor, each bishop shall be an ordained minister of Word and Sacrament who shall exercise leadership in the mission of this church and in so doing interpret and advocate the mission of this church within the synod (See §8.12.).

Members of the Conference of Bishops acknowledge their role and commit to support the mission and ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Conference members are further committed to advocate for the mission and ministry of the ELCA to the members of our synods and to encourage generous support for funding mission and ministry in our congregations, synods, and churchwide organization.

Synodical bishops acknowledge that partnership in funding the ministries of the ELCA requires trust, transparency, and mutual accountability, and understand that decisions made within each synod have an impact upon ministry together. They remain committed to look to the opportunities and needs

beyond individual synods as they seek together to serve, support, and witness in Jesus' name for the common good in the Church and in God's world.

3. Companion and Partner Synod

- a. Relationships with Companion Synods necessitates following the guidelines provided by the Global Mission unit. It is imperative to be fully aware of the unique cultures and patterns of life within the country and the church of a companion synod. Our commitment is to accompany each other in our shared mission and journey of faith. Conversations with the appropriate staff member in the Global Mission unit is an integral part of the program. Conversations with colleagues who have experienced visits and exchanges with their companion synods can be helpful, as well.
- b. The sharing of history, context, structure, and resources is the basis of the partner synod relationships. Opportunities may present themselves for visits or exchanges, as well. Ongoing prayer support is encouraged in both companion and partner synod relationships.

D. WITNESS TO UNITY

1. Participation

- a. Meetings of the Conference of Bishops are a high priority for synodical bishops, for the sake of one's self and each other and this church.
- b. The Academy for Bishops, when providing continuing education that informs and supports the ministry of bishops, holds the same high priority.

2. Additional Service

Bishops represent the Conference of Bishops on various boards and committees of this church. The terms and meeting schedules of these groups are conveyed by the group to the bishop. Normally these are advisory roles, affording voice but not vote. The conference appreciates but does not require oral or written reports on the actions and business, as the bishops involved deem appropriate. Bishops also serve on committees and task forces within the conference. These appointments are made by the Executive Committee. A survey of interests for these areas of service within the conference may be utilized to inform assignments. However, assignments to committees will reflect the needs of the conference and the committees themselves rather than the preferences of individual bishops.

3. Affirmation and Admonition

Bishops place a high value on their relationships within the Conference of Bishops, and strive to maintain a climate of trust and integrity with one another. Bishops respect one another's decisions, but also realize that local and synodical decisions and actions can have an impact in other areas of this church. In this regard, members of the conference hold one another accountable to Matthew 18:18. Bishops further commit themselves to honoring the eighth commandment in their work together.

4. Ethics Following Service as Bishop

- a. It is expected that when a synodical bishop leaves the office, he/she will continue to be a resource to this church, including those currently serving in the office of bishops. Every effort to make a smooth transition of leadership, including sharing of pertinent and confidential information on rostered leaders, congregations, etc. needs to be initiated by the bishop leaving office. It is essential that the trust and confidences between present and former bishops be maintained permitting the open exchange of pertinent information in a candid and sufficient manner.
- b. Synodical bishops who retire, resign, or conclude their service as bishop shall respect the integrity of the office in which they no longer serve, and shall not exercise functions assigned to synodical bishops without direct invitation from the current bishop of the synod or the presiding bishop.
- c. Terms of address for those who no longer serve in the office of synodical bishop vary throughout this church. Some synods confer the honorary designation "Bishop Emeritus," others do not. Former bishops should be mindful of proper use of title following their term of service, so as to be clear that they are former, not current.