

# **SIERRA PACIFIC SYNOD ASSEMBLY STANDING RULES OF ORDER FOR THE 2023 SYNOD ASSEMBLY**

## **I. MEMBERSHIP AND CREDENTIALS**

- A. Voting and non-voting membership shall be as stated in the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Sierra Pacific Synod.
- B. Every congregation shall send the credentials of its rostered minister(s) and duly elected lay voting members to the Registrar no later than one month prior to the assembly.
- C. Any members of a congregation (pursuant to the rules regarding number of voting members allowed per congregation) who registered as visitors while awaiting their congregation's membership in the ELCA will be automatically granted voting member status upon said congregation's recognition and reception through action of the synod assembly.
- D. All ministers of Word and Sacrament rostered in Full Communion Partner Denominations who have been approved to serve by Letter of Extended Service or Letter of Pastoral Service in a congregation or ministry of the Sierra Pacific Synod shall be granted voice and vote in this Assembly.
- E. The Credentials Committee, appointed by the Synod Council, shall be responsible for the certification of all rostered and lay members and shall maintain a record of their attendance at the Assembly, including the publishing of timely credentials reports during the course of the Assembly.

## **II. FLOOR SEATING**

- A. All members shall record their presence upon arrival at the Assembly site and be identified throughout the Assembly by wearing the appropriate member badge. Badges are non-transferable and must be worn at all times.
- B. Seating of voting members on the convention floor shall be at designated tables. Members must be at their proper seats in order for their vote to be counted. Voting members at other tables or standing in the aisles or doorways will not be included in any count.
- C. Tables for members with voice only will be identified and are for these persons only. Other members will be seated in chairs located at either end of the meeting hall.
- D. Visitors shall be permitted to sit at main meeting hall tables with voting members, but may be asked to move from voting member tables when votes are being taken.

## **III. RESOLUTIONS and MEMORIALS**

*As the highest legislative body of the Sierra Pacific Synod, the Synod Assembly requests action by the three expressions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (congregations, synod, or churchwide) through resolutions and memorials. Therefore, the resolution process is an integral component of the business of the Assembly.*

- A. Submission of Resolutions and Memorials
  - 1. Resolutions or memorials submitted by the Synod Council or the Bishop shall be presented directly to the Assembly without change.
  - 2. Resolutions or memorials proposed or endorsed by synod congregations, authorized worshipping communities, conferences, discipling teams, task forces, affiliated organizations and institutions, or at least fifteen voting members of the Assembly shall be submitted to the Resolutions Committee for presentation to the Assembly. Synod congregations, authorized worshipping communities, conferences, discipling teams, task forces, or affiliated organizations and institutions proposing or endorsing a resolution or memorial shall provide the Resolutions Committee a copy of the body's minutes or other

indication that a majority of the body's members approves proposing or endorsing the resolution or memorial.

3. All resolutions and memorials shall be accompanied by a completed *Resource Impact Reporting Form*, indicating the potential resource impact (both financial and personnel) that implementation of the memorial or resolution will have upon the churchwide organization, the synod, and/or congregations.
4. Resolutions or memorials to be presented to the Assembly through the Resolutions Committee shall be reviewed by the Synod Council prior to the Assembly, and the Council may recommend action to the Assembly.
5. Only the Bishop and groups and organizations listed in subsections 1, 2, and 3 above may submit resolutions or memorials for presentation to the Assembly.

#### B. Resolutions Committee

1. There shall be a Resolutions Committee consisting of four persons, appointed by the Synod Council for staggered, non-renewable three-year terms. The Council shall designate the committee chairperson.
2. The committee shall receive, review, and prepare resolutions and memorials, in consultation with the submitters of such resolutions or memorials, for presentation to the Synod Assembly, and may edit or consolidate resolutions or memorials for clarity and procedural purposes
3. The Resolutions Committee shall report its recommendations on resolutions and memorials to the Synod Assembly. Such recommendations do not require a second.
  - a. When the Resolutions Committee recommends approval, the committee's recommendation shall be the main motion before the assembly.
  - b. When the Resolutions Committee recommends the adoption of a substitute or alternative resolution or memorial, the committee's recommendation shall be the main motion before the assembly. A voting member of the Assembly may move to substitute the original resolution or memorial in place of the committee's revised version of the resolution or memorial.
  - c. When the Resolutions Committee recommends referral, the committee's recommendation shall become the main motion before the assembly.
  - d. When the Resolutions Committee recommends that the assembly decline a proposed resolution or memorial, the recommendation shall be reported to the assembly. If the author or another voting member wishes to bring the declined proposed resolution or memorial to the floor, they may move the matter and it shall become the main motion before the assembly. The committee's recommendation shall then be received for information.
4. If the Resolutions Committee is of the opinion that a resolution or memorial is unconstitutional, it shall note that opinion when the resolution is presented to the Assembly.
5. The Resolutions Committee may present multiple resolutions or memorials to the Synod Assembly *en bloc* for consideration, provided notice is given to the Voting Members of the Assembly prior to the adoption of the Agenda. A voting member of the Assembly may request that an individual resolution or memorial be removed from *en bloc* consideration by notifying the Synod Secretary before the close of the first plenary session of the Assembly.

#### C. Timetable

1. The deadline for resolutions and memorials to be received in the Synod Office shall be sixty days before the start of the Synod Assembly each year. The purpose of this provision is to allow the Resolutions Committee time to review resolutions and memorials and to have materials distributed to voting members approximately thirty days prior to the Assembly.

2. Any resolution or memorial submitted after the deadline will only be considered if it can be demonstrated that there is a compelling reason justifying the inability to have had the resolution or memorial submitted by the deadline. Late resolutions or memorials must also go first to the Resolutions Committee; the committee will make a judgement as to whether there is sufficient compelling reason for a late submission. If so, an assembly motion to suspend the rules for the purpose of considering the resolution or memorial must first pass the assembly by a 2/3 vote before the resolution or memorial is allowed to be considered.
3. Resolutions or memorials that are the direct result of the Assembly's response to items that are listed on the Assembly agenda and resolutions or memorials that address issues of such an immediate and urgent nature that they clearly cannot be postponed until the next Assembly shall be placed on the agenda only after submission to the Resolutions Committee and a 2/3 affirmative vote of the Assembly. With the exception of resolutions of courtesy and thanks, no resolutions or memorials other than those submitted for consideration under these guidelines shall be introduced from the convention floor.

#### **IV. DEBATE**

- A. During debate on any issue, the Chair shall, insofar as possible, alternate between those speaking in favor and those speaking against the motion on the floor.
- B. All speakers, when recognized by the Chair, shall state their name and the congregation or organization which they represent or other capacity which entitles them to speak.
- C. All motions and amendments (except those of a procedural nature) to be considered by the Assembly shall be delivered to the Chair in writing at the time of presentation. Motion forms may either be completed and forwarded electronically or may be completed by hand, signed, and sent to the Chair in order to receive consideration.
- D. During debate, no person shall speak more than two minutes or more than twice on the same motion. The Chair may rule additional time for purpose of information or clarification. Floor debate on any one resolution normally shall be limited to fifteen minutes and may be extended at the discretion of the Chair.
- E. A member obtaining the attention of the Chair for the purpose of debate may not at the same time "move the previous question" or make another incidental motion.
- F. A motion to end debate by moving the previous question shall apply only to the immediately preceding motion. A motion to end debate on all matters on the floor or more than the immediately pending question is not in order.
- G. Substitute Motions -- When a substitute motion is made, secondary amendments may be offered first to the original motion. After all secondary amendments to the original motion have been disposed of, secondary amendments to the substitute motion may be offered. When all amendments to the substitute motion have been disposed of, the vote shall be taken on whether the substitute motion is to be substituted as the original motion or be rejected.
- H. No part of this section shall be construed to apply to messages and reports by agencies, officers of the synod, or to guest speakers to whom special time has been allotted.

#### **V. CONSIDERATION OF THE BUDGET**

- A. Any motion to amend the proposed budget shall be delivered to the Chair in writing at the time of presentation. Motion forms may either be completed and forwarded electronically or may be completed by hand, signed, and sent to the Chair in order to receive consideration. Any proposal increasing any line item expenditure in the proposed budget shall indicate from which line or lines an equal amount is to be decreased.
- B. Any proposal to appropriate funds which is presented to a meeting of the Synod Assembly without the approval of the Synod Council shall require a two-thirds vote for adoption, except that amendments to the proposed budget which do not change the budget total may be

approved by a simple majority of the Synod Assembly. (S10.04.)

## **VI. NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS**

- A. There shall be a Nominating Committee as defined in the Constitution and Bylaws.
- B. The following procedures shall apply to all nominations.
  - 1. Each candidate shall provide biographical information for the Nominations Section of the Bulletin of Reports and any subsequent documents that may be distributed to voting members during the Assembly.
  - 2. Pictures of all candidates, if provided by the candidates, shall be made available in the Nominations Section of the Bulletin of Reports and in any subsequent documents that may be distributed to voting members during the Assembly.
  - 3. Candidates shall introduce themselves during a ninety-second appearance, giving name, congregation, conference, and positions of service.
  - 4. The initial ballot for each office shall list the names of candidates in alphabetical order. Each succeeding ballot shall list the names by order of votes received, with the highest number listed first.
  - 5. No reference to incumbency, racial or ethnic background, language, or any other distinction shall be noted on the ballot.
- C. There shall be an Elections Committee, consisting of one representative of the Nominating Committee (appointed by that Committee), and three other persons appointed by the Synod Council. This Committee shall supervise all elections at the Assembly, with the exception of the election of synod bishop, which shall be conducted under the auspices of the Bishop Election Committee.
- D. All elections shall be in accordance with Chapter 9 of the constitution of the Sierra Pacific Synod.
- E. The elections for all positions in the Synod shall be by written or electronic ballot. Unless otherwise stipulated, the Nominating Committee shall nominate at least two names for each position to be filled, and further nominations may be made from the floor with the consent of the nominee.
- F. Nominations for the nine Conference representative positions on the Synod Council shall come from the nine Conferences of the Sierra Pacific Synod. The deadline for nominations to be received in the Synod Office shall be sixty days before the start of the Synod Assembly each year. Up to two persons may be nominated by each conference. No nominations from the floor will be allowed.
- G. Nominations for all other Synod Council positions, including elected officers other than bishop, may be made from the floor by written means announced by the Nominating Committee at the opening of the assembly. Such nominations shall include a statement that consent to serve if elected has been given by the nominee, as well as any other materials necessary to fulfill requirements for nomination included in these rules. Acceptance of a nomination by the Nominations Committee places a candidate in nomination; agenda time will not be provided for verbal nominations.
- H. Unless otherwise stipulated, a majority of the votes cast shall be necessary for election in all elections by the Assembly. The names of the persons receiving the highest number of votes, but not elected by a majority of the votes cast on a preceding ballot, shall be entered on the next ballot to the number of two for each vacancy unfilled.
- I. Election for Bishop
  - 1. The election for bishop shall be governed by the provisions of the Constitution and Bylaws of the Sierra Pacific Synod.
  - 2. 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.

3. The Assembly agenda shall include time for the seven persons (plus ties) who received the greatest number of legal votes on the second ballot to address the Assembly prior to the third ballot. Responses shall be limited to five minutes and the sequence of speakers shall be determined by lot.
4. When the number of candidates reaches three people (plus ties), the assembly will be split into three rooms, with three conferences in each room. Each candidate will spend 25 minutes in each room answering five moderated questions, with five minutes to respond to each question. The candidates will then move to the next room until all candidates have had the opportunity to address each room.
5. When there are two remaining candidates, each candidate will be able to address the assembly for 5 minutes each, responding to one key question.
6. The agenda may also include other opportunities for voting members to meet or hear from candidates. The specific plans for such interaction, including time allowed, format, etc., shall be approved by the Synod Council and adopted by the Assembly as part of the agenda.

## **VII. DISTRIBUTION OF MATERIALS AND DISPLAY SPACE**

- A. Only materials authorized by the Synod Secretary or their designee(s) shall be distributed to voting members of the assembly during the assembly.
- B. Authorization for setting up displays and exhibits, and for placing posters, announcements, etc., at Assemblies of the Sierra Pacific Synod shall be limited to those agencies or groups which are affiliated with the Synod or the ELCA, or are direct beneficiaries of the synodical or churchwide budget. The selling of goods or services will not be allowed, except that the ELCA Publishing House will be permitted a commercial display area. All exceptions to this rule must be approved in advance by the Secretary of the Synod or their designee.

## **VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

- A. The adjournment of the Assembly shall put to an end all business unfinished at the close of the session, unless delegates have specifically voted to place a given item on the agenda of the next regular Synod Assembly. Resolutions not yet considered by the Assembly shall be referred to the Synod Council or to the relevant committee, team, or office of the Synod. Such referral shall be for study only unless specifically referred for implementation.

## **IX. PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE**

- A. The Bishop shall appoint one or more parliamentarians who shall give advice and assistance on matters of parliamentary procedure.
- B. Unless otherwise ordered, parliamentary procedure shall be in accordance with *Robert's Rules of Order*, latest edition.

## **X. PROXY VOTING PROHIBITED**

- A. Proxy and absentee voting shall not be permitted in the transaction of any business of this synod. (\*S7.31.)

## **XI. AMENDMENTS AND SUSPENSION**

- A. These Rules of Order may be amended or suspended for a definite purpose by a two-thirds vote of the members.