



HOW TO WRITE A RESOLUTION OR A MEMORIAL FOR THE 2025 SYNOD ASSEMBLY

WHO can submit a Resolution or a Memorial to the Synod Assembly?

The Southwestern Washington Synod Constitution only gives the privilege of submitting resolutions or memorials to the Synod Assembly for action: the four Synod Officers, the Synod Council as a whole, Synod conferences, Synod congregations, Synod Committees & Work Teams, and Synod Assembly Voting Members.

WHEN to submit?

Resolutions or memorials must be submitted to the bishop's office ninety (90) days prior to the opening of the assembly (**submitted by March 12, 2025**) for consideration by the assembly. Resolutions received after that date shall be accepted for assembly consideration if the Resolutions Committee adjudges it to be of overriding importance and urgency which is not adequately covered by documents already before the assembly, except that resolutions germane to matters under consideration by the assembly may be accepted at the time the matter is being considered. (S7.15.03). ***E-mail your completed resolutions and memorials to the synod office at: swwsynod@plu.edu or mail to SW WA Synod: 420-121st St S, Tacoma, WA 98444. It must be received or postmarked no later than 11:59pm on Wednesday, March 12, 2025.***

Who May Address Whom?

1. Synod Assemblies address the Churchwide Assembly, congregations, members, Synod Council and Synod Boards;
2. Synod Councils address the ELCA Church Council; and
3. Synod Councils address churchwide units through the ELCA Church Council's Executive Committee, including forwarding actions of the Synod Assembly.

HOW are resolutions or memorials to be written?

A Memorial addresses broad policy issues and are passed by the synod assembly for consideration by the Churchwide Assembly. Only a Synod Assembly may address a memorial to the Churchwide Assembly. Synod Councils are not authorized to adopt memorials. Once memorials are received by the churchwide organization, they are referred to the Memorials Committee, which is appointed by the Church Council to review and make recommendations to the Churchwide Assembly.

Once a memorial has been adopted by the Synod Assembly, it is forwarded to the Office of the Secretary so it can be submitted to the Churchwide Assembly. Once received by the churchwide organization, memorials are referred to the Memorials Committee, which is appointed by the Church Council to review and make recommendations to the Churchwide Assembly. The Memorials Committee meets in the year of a churchwide assembly after all synod assemblies are over.

A Resolution is requesting action from the synod congregations, members, a particular Churchwide unit, Synod Board or to a specific concern. As a practical matter, resolutions have a narrower focus than memorials because they request for consideration or action



by individual units or offices or the Church Council by way of the Church Council Executive Committee. Thus, for example, a request for the Church Council to recommend a parliamentary rule or action by a unit would be the subject of a resolution, but a request to change an ELCA policy should be a memorial. A synod council may pass resolutions between meetings of their Synod Assembly and forward them to the Church Council for consideration, or to the Church Council Executive Committee if the desired action involves referral to a unit, or office of the churchwide organization.

A resolution of a Synod Council cannot direct the Church Council to take a specific action. Likewise, **a memorial** from a Synod Assembly cannot order that the Churchwide Assembly vote in a particular way.

A resolution and memorial may NOT be combined in one action. That is, the Church Council and the Churchwide Assembly may not be addressed on the same subject.

Please note that memorials adopted at this year's Synod Assembly will not come before the Churchwide Assembly until August 2025. If issues addressed by our Synod Assembly require a timely response, it would be appropriate to consider a resolution to the Church Council rather than a memorial to the Churchwide Assembly.

The Synod uses *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised (12th ed)* for business procedures. A main motion is simply a motion that brings business before the assembly. It is the basic mechanism to present a matter to the assembly for possible action.

Resolutions and memorials frequently contain both "resolved" clauses and "whereas" clauses:

"Resolved" clauses state the action to be taken by the assembly; **"whereas" clauses** constitute a preamble describing the reasons for the proposed action. "Whereas" clauses are not required, in fact *Roberts Rules of Order, Newly Revised (11th ed)*, Section 10, page 107 discourages their use:

In general, the use of a preamble should be limited to cases where it provides little-known information without which the point or the merits of a resolution are likely to be poorly understood, where unusual importance is attached to making certain reasons for an action a matter of record, or the like.

If **"whereas" clauses are used**, there should be as few as necessarily. They should be succinct and factual. They should not be argumentative. These should be reviewed to ensure that any "whereas" clauses comply with *Robert's Rules of Order*.

"Resolved" clauses, if adopted, become the officially worded statement of an action taken by a legislative body and a request for further action by the churchwide organization or the Churchwide Assembly. This means that they should be concise, accurate and complete. They also should be unambiguous and should state clearly the proposed action. Just as any main motion, "resolved" clauses should not employ offensive language that would be improper in debate, according to *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised (11 ed.)*, Section 15, Page 104.



"Resolved" clauses should clearly define: To whom is the request for action addressed? Who will implement the action? What should be done? Does this pertain to the life and ministry of the synod or ELCA Churchwide? Is the action requested one that the synod or ELCA can appropriately and effectively implement? What may the action cost and how is it to be funded? When should the action be done? To whom should the results be reported?

Some resolutions and memorials should not be considered. Any resolution or memorials that conflicts with the governing documents of this church is an "improper motion." As stated in Roberts Rules of Order, Newly Revised (11th ed), Section 39, page 343:

Motions that conflict with the corporate charter, constitution, or bylaws of a society or with the procedural rules prescribed by national, state, or local laws, are out of order, and if any motion of this kind is adopted, it is null and void.

Memorials must include a final "resolved" clause asking the Churchwide Assembly to act (or refrain from acting) in a particular way.

Clarity in the text of any resolution or memorial is important. A good test is, "Does this statement in the resolution make any sense? Will the resolution be understandable apart from its discussion in this Synod Assembly?"

The final "resolved" clause of resolutions will differ depending upon whether they are intended for the attention of the Church Council, or a churchwide unit or office, or synod congregations. Here are some sample final paragraphs for resolutions:

A. FOR REFERRAL TO A CHURCHWIDE PROGRAM OR SERVICE UNIT:

RESOLVED that the Southwestern Washington Synod Assembly memorialize the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to ...[clearly describe the proposed course of action], or direct the Southwestern Washington Synod Council to forward this resolution to the Church Council's Executive Committee for proper referral and disposition under the bylaws and continuing resolutions of this church.

B. FOR FORWARDING TO THE CHURCH COUNCIL: RESOLVED, that the Southwestern Washington Synod Assembly direct the Southwestern Washington Synod Council to forward this resolution to the Church Council for consideration and possible action.

C. A MEMORIAL ADOPTED BY SYNOD ASSEMBLY is submitted to the Churchwide Assembly with a recommendation for action from the Churchwide Assembly Memorials Committee.

Review and Processing of Draft Memorials and Resolutions

Those submitting a resolutions/memorial to this Synod Assembly, email the form to the Synod at swwsynod@plu.edu or mail it to the SWWA Synod Office. The resolutions and memorials are forwarded to the Resolutions Committee which screens proposed actions and thereby facilitates discussion of important issues and saves valuable time at the Synod Assembly in May.



According to our Rules of Procedure, the Resolutions Committee is able to put resolutions/memorials and main motions in the proper form, eliminated duplications where similar motions are offered, and ensure that all motions relating to a specific subject will be offered in logical sequence. They will work with the resolution's/memorial's author(s) to make substantive edits and alterations as appropriate, and may even combine related memorials, resolutions or main motions into a single or new resolution, memorial or main motion. The Committee must report all resolutions and memorials submitted by February 4, 2023 to the Synod Assembly, although the committee can report motions without a recommendation. According to this Synod Assembly's Rules of Procedure, the Resolutions Committee may edit, prepare and alternative memorials, resolutions or main motions, or consolidate them into a single proposed action multiple memorials, resolutions or main motions on the same or similar subjects.

The Resolutions Committee takes into consideration the following:

1. Is the proposed memorial or resolution timely (i.e. was it submitted by the deadline)?
2. Is the proposed memorial or resolution consistent with the governing documents of this church?
3. Is the proposed memorial or resolution germane to issues on the agenda?
4. Does the proposed memorial or resolutions address a priority, ministry or concern of this synod and this church?
5. Is the proposed memorial or resolutions clearly drafted?
6. Do the "resolved" clauses clearly define the proposed course of action?
7. If the proposed memorial or resolution contains "whereas" clauses, do they explain the proposed action and are they accurate or non-argumentative?
8. Does the proposed memorial or resolution have budgetary or human resource implications, and if so, how will they be addressed?
9. Are the proposed actions feasible and appropriate for the Synod Assembly, Church Council, Churchwide Assembly or the churchwide unit or office that will be addressed?
10. Are there other memorials or resolutions that address the same or similar issues.



Sample Resolutions that have passed our Synod Assemblies:

ENDING HUNGER AS A CORE CONVICTION

WHEREAS, 800 million people worldwide are chronically undernourished and 1.2 billion people live on less than \$1 per day; and

WHEREAS, 30 million people in the United States, including 13 million children, cannot afford an adequate and balanced diet; and

WHEREAS, advocacy organizations, like Bread for the World and the Institute for Food and Development Policy (FoodFirst), have established that there is a sufficient food supply to feed the earth's population; and

WHEREAS, the Holy Scriptures are very clear in numerous passages that God has compassion on the poor (for example, Jeremiah 22:15-16 and Luke 6:20-21) and that it is God's will that the hungry be fed (for example, Psalm 146:5-7 and Matthew 25:34-35); and therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Southwestern Washington Synod Assembly memorialize the 2017 Churchwide Assembly - Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to make ending hunger a core conviction for this church.

Submitted by the Synod Hunger Committee

(To Whom: Churchwide Assembly

What: to make ending hunger a core conviction for this church)

BIENNIAL SYNOD ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION

Whereas, annual Synod Assemblies pose financial hardships on congregations and the Synod, and

Whereas, the Synod Constitution allows for at least a biennial assembly [†S7.11. A regular meeting of the Synod Assembly shall be held at least biennially.], be it

Resolved, that the Southwestern Washington Synod amend the Synod Constitution by deleting bylaw S7.11.01, which reads "Meetings of the Synod Assembly shall be at least annually" in order to allow the Synod to hold Synod Assemblies biennially.

Submitted by the South Sound Conference of the Southwestern Washington Synod

(To Whom: Synod Assembly

What: Change the synod constitution to allow biennial Synod Assemblies)



ELECTRONIC NOTIFICATION FOR CONGREGATIONS

WHEREAS, delivery of documents and notification of meetings can be effectively accomplished at a lower economic and environmental cost by email and other electronic means; and

WHEREAS, an increasing proportion of congregation members prefer to receive documents and notification via email and other electronic means; and

WHEREAS, the *Model Constitution for Congregations* of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America® makes no provision for providing such notifications and documents by email or other electronic means; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Church Council's Executive Committee prepare and recommend to the Churchwide Assembly modifications to the *Model Constitution for Congregations* that would allow for prudent use of email and other electronic means to provide notice and documents to congregational members; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southwestern Washington Synod Assembly direct the Southwestern Washington Synod Council to forward this resolution to the Church Council's Executive Committee for proper referral and disposition under the bylaws and continuing resolutions of this church.

Submitted by First Lutheran Community Church Council, Port Orchard

(To Whom: Synod Council to forward to Church Council Executive Committee

What: Allow electronic means to provide notice and documents to congregational members)

MEMORIAL ON PAID LEAVE FOR ROSTERED MINISTERS: PARENTAL AND FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE

WHEREAS, the standard compensation guideline recommendations for Rostered Ministers is currently "maternity leave of six weeks with full salary, housing, and benefits" and "paternity leave... for at least two weeks with full salary, housing, and benefits"; and

WHEREAS, there is no current recommendation for Rostered Ministers for Family Medical Leave in order to care for family members due to medical issues; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA Social Statement on Abortion (1991) states, "Because parenthood is a vocation that women and men share, this church supports public and private initiatives to provide adequate maternity and paternity leaves, greater flexibility in the workplace, and efforts to correct the disparity between the incomes of men and women," (p. 8); and

WHEREAS, the ELCA Draft Social Statement on Women and Justice (2017) states that we: "Seek, support, and advocate for resources for families and communities that empower parents, whether single or coupled, to nurture, protect, and provide for their household in ways that do not reinforce gender-based stereotypes. In particular, advocate for men



to participate in all family roles associated with the home, caregiving, parenting, and nurturing," (p. 47); and

WHEREAS, Martin Luther calls parenthood "a special position of honor, higher than that of any other walk of life under it"ⁱ; and

WHEREAS, our faith calls us to be good and generous stewards of our congregational resources, which includes the health, family wellness, and compensation of our Rostered Ministers;

WHEREAS, the International Labour Organization recommends 14 weeks of maternity leave, including 6 weeks of compulsory postnatal leaveⁱⁱ and concludes "maternity, paternity, and care responsibilities should become a normal fact of business life"^{iv};

WHEREAS, the Institute for Women's Policy Research "Paid Parental Leave in the United States," (2014) part of Scholars' Papers sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor Women's Bureau in commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of *American Women: Report of the President's Commission on the Status of Women, 1963* states: "Family leave, both paid and unpaid, has been shown to have significant benefits for the health of individual family members and for the well-being of the family overall."^v

BE IT RESOLVED that the Southwestern Washington Synod Assembly memorialize the 2022 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to recommend to Synod Assemblies that Synod Councils insert the following paragraph into the Compensation Guidelines for Rostered Ministers: "Parental and Family Leave: Parental Leave: Paid leave of up to twelve weeks is recommended upon the birth or adoption of a child to recover and/or care for a new baby.

Family Medical Leave: Paid leave of up to twelve weeks is recommended to care for a family member with a serious health condition."; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the congregations of our Church follow these guidelines whenever possible not only for rostered ministers, but also for lay professionals and support staff in our congregations; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Churchwide and synod offices provide resources such as: lists of and rates for potential supply pastors, rates for emergency coverage, contracts for short-term interim coverage, and other helpful practices in order to make providing such leave affordable and manageable for congregations.

¹ "2019 Salary and Compensation Guidelines for Rostered Ministers of Word and Sacrament and Word and Service, Southwestern Washington Synod," p. 17.

¹ "The Large Catechism," *The Book of Concord*, Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert, Eds., Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 200. 400.105.

¹ILO: Maternity Protection Resource Package, Module 5, available at: <http://mprp.ilo.org/allegati/en/m5.pdf>

¹ ILO: Maternity and paternity at work: Law and practice across the world (Geneva, 2014), available at: www.ilo.org/maternityprotection

¹ "Paid Parental Leave in the United States: What the data tell us about access, usage, and economic and health benefit," Barbara Gault, Ph.D. Heidi Hartmann, Ph.D. Ariane Hegewisch.



Jessica Milli, Ph.D. Lindsey Reichlin, 2014. Available at
https://www.dol.gov/wb/resources/paid_parental_leave_in_the_united_states.pdf

(**To Whom:** Synod Assembly to Churchwide Assembly ; Passed 2022 ELCA Churchwide Assembly
What: to recommend specific parental and family leave guidelines)

WOMEN AND JUSTICE RESOLUTION

A resolution of Southwestern Washington Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in support of Women and Justice in the Lutheran Church, the United States of America, and throughout the world.

WHEREAS, gender-based violence is a widespread and often-suppressed problem within our society; and

WHEREAS, while gender-based violence and inequality are generally opposed, many of us have a difficult time recognizing and naming specific instances of violence and inequality; and

WHEREAS, at the 2009 Churchwide Assembly, the ELCA authorized the development of a social statement on justice for women and such a statement does not yet exist; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA has formed the *Task Force on Women and Justice: One in Christ*, which has begun the work toward the aforementioned social statement; and

WHEREAS, the church has frequently been silent in response to reports of unjust treatment of women within the church; and

WHEREAS, discrimination against women in workplace, government, military, continues to exist; and

WHEREAS, by his life and teaching, Jesus taught that all are equal before God, both including and honoring women; and

WHEREAS, the Gospel calls us to advocate on behalf of any who are oppressed; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the congregations of the Southwestern Washington Synod commit to recognizing and addressing issues of gender-based violence and justice for women within our church and within our community; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the congregations of the Southwestern Washington Synod dedicate themselves to treating all of their members and guests with dignity and respect; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southwestern Washington Synod commends the *ELCA Task Force on Women and Justice: One in Christ* for its work to date; and be it further



RESOLVED, that Southwestern Washington Synod encourages its congregations to participate in the first phase of the study brought forth by the Task Force, "*Faith, Sexism, Justice: Conversations toward a Social Statement*" this summer and present feedback to the Task Force before the deadline of August 31.

Submitted by Grace Lutheran Church, Port Townsend for the Synod Assembly

(To Whom: Synod Assembly and congregations of the Southwestern Washington Synod

What: Commit to recognizing and addressing issues of gender-based violence; treat others with respect, commend the ELCA Task Force on Women and Justice, and encourages congregations to study new social statement on Women and Justice and provide feedback to committee.)

ⁱ "2019 Salary and Compensation Guidelines for Rostered Ministers of Word and Sacrament and Word and Service, Southwestern Washington Synod," p. 17.

ⁱⁱ "The Large Catechism," *The Book of Concord*, Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert, Eds., Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 200. 400.105.

ⁱⁱⁱ ILO: Maternity Protection Resource Package, Module 5, available at: <http://mprp.itcilo.org/allegati/en/m5.pdf>

^{iv} ILO: Maternity and paternity at work: Law and practice across the world (Geneva, 2014), available at: www.ilo.org/maternityprotection

^v "Paid Parental Leave in the United States: What the data tell us about access, usage, and economic and health benefit," Barbara Gault, Ph.D. Heidi Hartmann, Ph.D. Ariane Hegewisch, Jessica Milli, Ph.D. Lindsey Reichlin, 2014. Available at https://www.dol.gov/wb/resources/paid_parental_leave_in_the_united_states.pdf

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