

Voting Membership

- ++S7.21. The membership of the Synod Assembly, of which at least 60 percent of the voting membership shall be composed of laypersons, shall be constituted as follows:
- a. All ordained ministers under call on the roster of this synod in attendance at the Synod Assembly shall be voting members.
 - b. All associates in ministry, deaconesses of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and diaconal ministers, under call, on the official lay rosters of this synod shall have both voice and vote as lay voting members in the Synod Assembly, in addition to the voting membership of lay members of congregations provided in item +S7.21.c.
 - c. A minimum of one lay member elected by each congregation with fewer than 175 baptized members and a minimum of two lay members elected by each congregation with 175 baptized members related to this synod, normally one of whom shall be male and one of whom shall be female, shall be voting members. The Synod Council shall establish a formula to provide additional lay representation from congregations on the basis of the number of baptized members in the congregation. The Synod Council shall seek to ensure that, as nearly as possible, 50 percent of the lay members of the assembly shall be female and 50 percent shall be male. Additional members from each congregation normally shall be equally divided between male and female.
 - d. Voting membership shall include the officers of this synod.
- S7.21.01 All retired ordained ministers on the roster of the synod shall elect 10% of their numbers to be voting members; all others shall be advisory members with voice but not vote.
- S7.21.02 One lay conference officer shall be a voting member of the Synod Assembly.
- S7.21.03 Any non-rostered lay Synod Minister on the bishop's executive staff in the Southeastern Minnesota Synod shall be a voting member of the Synod Assembly, provided that such an individual is also a voting member of a congregation of this synod.
- S7.23. All retired ordained ministers, all ordained ministers on leave from call, all associates in ministry on leave from call or retired who are not elected as voting members, all deaconesses of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America on leave from call or retired, and all diaconal ministers of this church on leave from call or retired, all of whose names appear on the rosters of this synod, shall have the privilege of voice but not vote at all meetings of the Synod Assembly. The presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and such other official representatives of this church as may be designated from time to time by the Church Council shall also have voice but not vote in the meetings of the Synod Assembly. Like privileges shall be accorded to those additional persons whom the Synod Assembly or the Synod Council shall from time to time designate.
- S7.24. Ordained ministers under call on the roster of this synod shall remain as members of the Synod Assembly so long as they remain under call and so long as their names appear on the roster of ordained ministers of this synod. Associates in ministry, deaconesses of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and diaconal ministers of this church serving under call on the roster of this synod shall remain as members of the Synod Assembly so long as they remain under call and



so long as their names appear on the official lay roster of this synod. Lay members of the Synod Assembly representing congregations shall continue as such until replaced by the election of new members or until they have been disqualified by termination of membership. Normally, congregations will hold elections prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.

- ++S7.25. With the exception of ordained ministers on the roster of this synod who reside outside the territory of this synod, each member of the Synod Assembly shall be a voting member of a congregation of this synod.
- S7.26. This synod may establish processes through the Synod Council that permit representatives of authorized worshipping communities of the synod, under ELCA bylaw 10.02.03., to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, consistent with +S7.21. Such authorized worshipping communities, acknowledged under criteria and procedures of the ELCA Division for Outreach and the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, shall accept and adhere to the Confession of Faith and Statement of Purpose of this church, shall be served by leadership under the criteria of this church, and shall be subject to the discipline of this church.
- S7.27. Duly elected voting members of the Synod Council who are not otherwise voting members of the Synod Assembly under +S7.21. shall be granted the privilege of both voice and vote as members of the Synod Assembly.
- ++S7.31. Proxy and absentee voting shall not be permitted in the transaction of any business of this synod.
- S7.32. Robert's Rules of Order, latest edition, shall govern parliamentary procedures of the Synod Assembly, unless otherwise ordered by the assembly.

Voting Member Credentials

Voting privileges may be transferred from one member to another within a congregation between the first and second days of assembly. The vote is not transferable after the opening of the fifth assembly session at 1:30 p.m. on Saturday, April 24, 2004.

Voting members must transfer their materials with their vote. No additional materials will be available.

Quorum

Fifty percent (50%) of the registered voting members shall constitute a quorum.

Privilege of the Assembly Floor

Voting members of the assembly shall have prior right to the assembly floor.

Officers of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Southeastern Minnesota Synod of the ELCA shall be entitled to the privilege of the floor at all times.

Voting members addressing the assembly during the discussion of a pending motion or resolution shall identify themselves by name and congregation.

Unless otherwise determined by a majority vote of the assembly, all speeches during discussion of motions or resolutions shall be limited to two minutes each.

Voice Granted

Pastors not on the Southeastern Minnesota Synod roster serving as interim pastors in the synod shall have voice on the assembly floor.

Budget Impact

Any resolution that adds money to the budget should show a reduction of an equal amount in that same budget, or provide a proposal as to how the additional funds would be acquired.



Committee on Reference and Counsel

A resolution for consideration at the Synod Assembly must be submitted to the Committee on Reference and Counsel by 10 a.m. Saturday, April 24, 2004 unless otherwise determined by the Synod Assembly.

Any resolution presented during the Assembly must have the signatures of 50 voting members in order to be considered by the assembly. Any resolution coming through conferences would be accepted without the signatures.

Nominee Biographical Information

Those nominated for the ballot from the assembly floor may submit their biographical data prior to 2 p.m. on Friday, April 23, 2004. This information will be distributed prior to the 10 a.m. session on Saturday, April 24, 2003.

Invalid Ballots

Illegible ballots shall be considered invalid.

Motion to Adjourn

A motion to adjourn shall be debatable.

Distribution of Materials

Materials may be distributed on the floor of the assembly only with the written consent of the bishop of the synod. In cases where the bishop does not consent, appeal may be made to the Committee on Reference and Counsel. That committee's decision shall be final.

Visitor Seating

Visitors are welcome at the Assembly. As a courtesy, please sit in the designated visitor area.

Assembly Vocabulary

Voting members are not delegates! We gather as members – baptized members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. We *assemble* for an *assembly*, not as a random collection of baptized members. Each assembly member, on behalf of our church (the ELCA), is assigned specific, strategic, and crucial responsibilities.

The terminology related to the legislative process of this church is not an accident. It was chosen by those who originally shaped the constitutions of our church

to reflect thoughtfully and carefully this church's policy. The words *Synod Assembly* rather than *convention*, and *voting members* rather than *delegates*, were deliberately used for our governing documents. The words *voting member* and *assembly* reflect the ecclesial understanding that the three primary expressions of our church – congregation, synod, and Churchwide organization – exist and serve within this one church.

Congregation: We know the church most consistently and most basically through the congregation of which we are a part. Each congregation is the primary center for mission within each community. Each congregation is created and gathered by Word and Sacrament, the means of grace for the people of faith. Members gather for worship, carry out service together, extend the arms of mercy not only to the immediate community but also, by means of the synod and churchwide organization, to the whole world.

Members also minister in their daily life. For decision-making, voting members assemble occasionally and properly for governance matters and elections.

Synod Assembly: The people of this church in each of the 65 synods are not sent as delegates from a given caucus; they assemble as duly selected members of this church with voting responsibilities for governance and elections on behalf of the synod.

The Synod Assembly is just that – an assembly of the people of this church, some of whom are granted the responsibility of being voting members. They are not to be regarded as politicized delegates to some regional party convention. They are members of this church entrusted with decision-making authority; they are summoned to serve on behalf of this church within the synod and are accountable to each member of each congregation, as well as the whole synod as an expression of the church.



The vocabulary we use shapes and reflects our understanding of our church. We can catch a vision of the whole church even as we care deeply for each member and each expression of the church.

*Description by
Rev. Lowell G. Almen, ELCA secretary*

The following information, condensed from the 2000 edition of Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, is offered as an aid for those seeking guidance in the fundamentals of parliamentary procedure. All page references are to the 10th Edition of Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised published by Perseus Publishing, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Orders of the Day, §18, PP. 211FF

A motion calling for the “Orders of the Day” is made for the purpose of requiring the assembly to conform to its adopted agenda.

This motion does not require a second; it is not debatable; it's not amendable; a two-thirds vote is required to refuse to proceed to the orders of the day; it cannot be reconsidered.

To Obtain the Floor, §3, P. 28FF

Prior to speaking in the assembly, whether to make a motion or to engage in debate, it is necessary for a member to obtain the floor, i.e., to be recognized by the chair as having the right to speak at that time.

Microphones are placed at convenient locations so that members may address the chair, when no one else “has the floor,” saying “Mister/Madame Chair.” If recognized by the chair, the member is entitled to speak.

Persons recognized by the chair are asked to identify themselves by giving their names, and the name of the congregation and city they represent. In a few instances, it is not necessary to seek recognition of the chair before speaking, e.g.:

- to appeal a decision by the chair – appeal to be made before any debate or other business has intervened (pp. 247-252);
- to call for “division,” if vote is doubtful (pp. 270-273);
- to call for a count, if the result of the

“division” is in doubt (pp. 270-273);

- to divide a question that contains a series of parts on different subjects (pp. 266-270);
- to extend time for consideration of a pending question or until scheduled recess or adjournment, when the orders of the day are announced or called for (pp. 215-216);
- to call for the orders of the day (pp. 211-216);
- to raise a point of order, or a question of order (pp. 240-247);
- to make a parliamentary inquiry (pp. 281-282);
- to raise a question of privilege, unless a person is speaking or unless such interruption is unavoidable (pp. 216-222);
- to request permission to read a paper or a section of a book (pp. 280-281, 286-287);
- to move reconsideration of a motion previously acted upon (pp. 304-321);
- to request permission to withdraw a motion, or to modify a motion, that has been stated by the chair (pp. 280-281, 283-286);
- to object to the consideration of the question (pp. 258-261).

Voting, §4, P. 42FF

Members may change their votes on a motion up to the time when the chairperson announces the result; after that, they can change their votes only by permission of the assembly (pp. 46, 395).

Most motions can be adopted by a majority of the members present and voting, provided a quorum is present.

The following motions require a two-thirds vote of members present and voting to adopt:

- Amend or rescind something previously adopted, if notice has not been given;
- Close nominations;
- Discharge an order for the day before it is pending;
- Extend time for consideration of pending question, or time until scheduled adjournment or recess;
- Limit or extend limits of debate;



- Make a special order;
- Previous question;
- Refuse to proceed to the orders of the day;
- Suspend the rules.

Amendment of Agenda, §41, P. 340FF

Any change in the program of assembly business, after it has been adopted, requires (a) a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting, or (b) a majority vote of all registered members, or (c) unanimous consent (p. 360). This will be modified by a proposed special assembly rule.

An item of business can be taken out of its prescribed order (a) by adopting, by a two-thirds vote, a motion to suspend the rules, or (b) by unanimous consent (p. 351).

Quasi Committee of the Whole, §52, P. 512FF

The assembly can “go into the quasi committee of the whole” to discuss under conditions of freedom approximating those of a committee a matter that can best be discussed informally (p. 160).

No binding decisions may be taken by a quasi committee of the whole; however, it may make recommendations to the assembly.

The chair of the quasi committee of the whole may be the presiding officer (p. 513).

During the period when the assembly is meeting as a quasi committee of the whole, even though the committee consists solely of members having vote and voice, it is technically not the assembly.

The rules, which apply to the assembly, also apply to the quasi committee of the whole, except as follows:

The only motions that are in order in committee of the whole are to adopt (within the committee, for inclusion in its report), to amend (what it is proposed to report), and to “rise” or “rise and report” except that, among the incidental motions, a point of order can be raised, an appeal from the decision of the chair can be made, a division of the assembly can be called for, and applicable requests and inquiries can be made. In

debate on motions to adopt or amend, unless a limit is prescribed by the assembly before it goes into committee of the whole, each member can speak an unlimited number of times for the same length of time as allowed by the assembly rules (p. 522).

Courtesy, §3, P. 22FF

Members should refer to speakers by title or some other designation, and should avoid mentioning names, if possible. A speaker’s motives should not be called into question (pp. 41, 379-382).

Amendments, §12, P. 125FF

When a motion brought before the assembly does not meet with ready acceptance by all the members and if it can be made more suitable or acceptable in an altered form, a proposal to modify the wording can be introduced by making a motion to amend. A motion may be amended by inserting words, striking out words, striking out and inserting words, adding words at the end of a sentence, and substituting. A motion to amend requires a second; is debatable, if the motion to be amended is debatable; can be amended; requires a majority vote even though the motion amended requires a two-thirds vote for its adoption; and can be reconsidered (pp. 108-111, 126-128).

Substitute, §12, P. 146FF

A motion to strike out an entire paragraph, section, or article, or a complete main motion, and to insert a different paragraph, section, article, or main motion is a motion to substitute. The motion to substitute requires a second; is debatable, if the motion is debatable; requires a majority vote; and is amendable. Amendments can be made first to the original and then to the substitute motion. When both have been perfected, the vote is taken on whether to substitute the proposed substitute (with any amendments to it that have been adopted) for the original paragraph, section, article, or main motion with any amendments that previously had been adopted. A majority vote is required. After the motion to substitute has been adopted, the substitute becomes the pending paragraph,



section, article, or main motion, and then the substituted material cannot be amended except by adding something that does not alter the content of the substituted material. When material has been substituted for other material, the assembly must still vote on whether the substituted material is to be adopted.

Lay on the Table, §17, P. 201FF

A motion of this character would, if adopted, permit the assembly to put aside temporarily a pending question, so that a more urgent matter can be considered. This motion requires a second; cannot be debated; cannot be amended; requires a majority vote; and cannot be reconsidered (pp. 201-204).

A motion to lay on the table should not be made if the intent is to “kill” the pending motion (p. 208). See “Postpone Indefinitely” below.

Limit or Extend Limits of Debate, §15, P. 183FF

The purpose of this motion may be (1) to shorten or to increase the limit (e.g., three minutes) placed upon each speaker, or (2) to limit the number of speeches, or (3) to close debate at a specified time. This motion requires a second; can be amended; cannot be debated; requires a two-thirds vote; and can be reconsidered (pp. 184-185).

Object to Consideration of a Matter, §26, P. 258FF

This motion is used to test the assembly’s desire even to consider an original main motion. It must be made immediately after the question is stated by the chair and before there has been any debate or higher ranking motion stated by the chair. Its use is to prevent discussion on controversial or personal questions. A member may rise and, without waiting for recognition, say, “I object to the consideration of the question (or motion).” A second is not required, and the motion may not be debated or amended. A two-thirds vote is required to sustain an objection to consideration (pp. 258-261).

Postpone Indefinitely, §11, P. 172FF

A motion to “postpone indefinitely” is used for one of two purposes: (1) to dispose of an ill-considered motion without voting on it directly; or (2) to get a “reading” on the strength of those supporting and those opposing a main motion. The effect of the motion, if adopted, is to “kill” the main motion. The motion to postpone indefinitely requires a second; is debatable; cannot be amended; requires a majority vote; and an affirmative vote only can be reconsidered (pp. 121-124).

Postpone to a Certain Time, §14, P. 172FF

A member has the right to make a motion to postpone action on another motion (1) so that it can be discussed more fully at a more convenient time, or (2) because arguments advanced during debate have indicated the need to make a decision at a later time. The time to which the motion is to be postponed should be stated definitely in this motion. The motion requires a second; is debatable; and can be amended. A majority vote is required unless the effect of the postponement is to create a special order, in which case a two-thirds vote is required; however, an amendment to the motion to postpone to a certain time requires only a majority vote. The motion to postpone to a certain time can be reconsidered (pp. 172-183).

Previous Question, §16, P. 189FF

To move the “previous question” is to bring the assembly to an immediate decision as to whether debate on another motion should cease. The maker of the motion must be properly recognized by the chair. The motion cannot be made by someone who has first participated in the debate. This motion requires a second; is not debatable; cannot be amended; requires a two-thirds vote; and can be reconsidered before any vote is taken under it. If adopted, the assembly proceeds, without further debate, to vote on the pending question. If the previous question is moved on “all pending questions,” and adopted, the assembly proceeds without



further debate, to vote successively on each pending question (pp. 189-201).

Reconsideration, §37, P. 304FF

Should it be deemed desirable to return to a motion already voted on, whether adopted or rejected, a motion is made to reconsider the vote on that subject. Such motion may be offered only by one who voted on the prevailing side of the issue, and may be made only on the day the previous vote on the subject was taken or on the next succeeding day of assembly business. If adopted, the question before the assembly is exactly the same question and it is in the form as at the time the original vote was taken. The motion to reconsider requires a second; is debatable if the motion to be reconsidered is debatable; cannot be amended; requires a majority vote; and cannot be reconsidered (pp. 304-324).

Refer, §13, P. 160FF

This motion may be used to refer a main motion, with or without amendments and with or without subsidiary motions, to the Synod Council or executive committee of the Synod Council. The motion to refer requires a second; is debatable; can be amended; and requires a majority vote (pp. 160-171).

Suspend the Rules, §25, P. 252FF

If by reason of the assembly's rules, it is not possible, according to Robert's Rules of Order, to take a procedural action (such as bringing forward an action scheduled for later consideration), a member may move to suspend the rules, stating the specific purpose to be achieved, but not to the specific rule.

Any such suspension of rules, however, may not conflict with the constitution or bylaws of this synod; or with the laws of the municipality, state, or nation; or with the fundamental principles of parliamentary law. A motion to suspend the rules requires a second; cannot be debated; and cannot be amended. A two-thirds vote is required to adopt. It cannot be reconsidered (pp. 252-258).

Take from the Table, §34, P. 289FF

The purpose of a motion to "take from the table" is to enable new consideration of a motion that had previously been laid on the table. Such motion is in order anytime after the business that interfered with consideration at an earlier time has been completed, provided no other business is before the assembly. A matter that has been tabled dies at the close of the assembly, if no motion is adopted to take it from the table. A motion to take it from the table requires a second; cannot be debated; and cannot be amended. A majority vote is required to adopt. It cannot be reconsidered (pp. 289-293).

This document has been adapted for synodical use from materials prepared for the 2001 Churchwide Assembly.

