

**Standing Rules for the Synod Assembly  
South Dakota Synod, ELCA  
2025**

**Introduction**

- 0.01** The purpose of any system of parliamentary procedure is to provide a structure within which a deliberative body may conduct its business with the greatest degree of efficiency consistent with full and free debate. Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, shall be in effect unless otherwise established by the assembly.

**Resolutions**

**1.01** Resolutions may be submitted to the Resolutions Committee by the Synod Council, Conference Assemblies, Synod Boards and Task Force Committees, Congregations of the Synod, Synod Auxiliaries, other ELCA Synod Assemblies, the Synod Bishop, Conference Caucuses, the Resolutions Committee, or corresponding Churchwide expression of the ELCA. Resolutions from individuals must gain the approval of one of the above groups before their resolution is considered. Every resolution shall have a specified source.

**1.01.1** When sources of resolutions know that their resolutions may be controversial or pertaining to sensitive issues, the sources are encouraged to arrange for a meeting with the Resolutions Committee. These arrangements for a meeting should be made with the committee chairperson prior to the convening of the Assembly.

**1.01.2** The Resolutions Committee, by direction of the Bishop shall meet early enough to complete preliminary work prior to the beginning of the meeting of the Assembly to allow time during the meeting of the Assembly:

- 1) for consultation with sources.
- 2) to deal with resolutions submitted during that meeting.
- 3) The order for the presentation of resolutions shall be determined by the Chair of the Resolutions Committee, the Bishop, and the Chair of The Synod Council. At the beginning of each plenary session, the The assembly is to be informed of the intended schedule of all pending resolutions and may take action to change the order of presentation of resolutions.
- 4) All resolutions or amendments dealing with one issue shall be presented together to the Assembly prior to action, and moved on any Single resolution.
- 5) As resolutions are received at the Synod Office, they should be edited for form and grammar by a committee appointed by the Bishop.

**1.01.3** Resolutions shall include a title reflecting the content of the resolution, its origin, and a number assigned by the Committee.

**1.01.4** The Committee, in consultation with the source of the resolution, may edit and Revise each resolution for clarity and consistency.

**1.01.5** The Committee must present each resolution substantially as it is received, but may propose amendments. The sources of resolutions should be informed of Resolutions Committee recommendations prior to plenary presentation. Consultation with the source of resolution is required in the case of substantive amendments prior to plenary presentation.

**1.01.6** The Committee may also draft such resolutions as it deems necessary or is directed by the Assembly.

**1.01.7** The Committee shall forward each resolution to the Assembly with one of the following recommendations:

**1.01.7.1 Do Pass**

"Do Pass" indicates the Committee's approval of the resolution and places it on the floor of the Assembly. No further motion or second is needed.

**1.01.7.2 Do Pass as Amended**

"Do Pass as Amended" indicates the Committee's approval of the Resolution modified by the Committee's amendment(s) and places the Resolution and the Committee's amendment(s) on the floor without further motion or second. Both Resolution and amendment(s) are considered together.

**1.01.7.3 No Recommendation**

"No Recommendation" indicates the Committee's inability or unwillingness to make a common recommendation. For the Resolution to be considered, it must be moved and seconded from the floor of the Assembly.

**1.01.7.4 Commit to Committee**

"Commit to Committee" places a motion on the floor of the Assembly to refer the Resolution to one of the Synod Boards or Committees

**1.01.7.5 Do Not Pass**

"Do Not Pass" indicates the Committee's recommendation not to pass the Resolution. For the Resolution to be considered, it must be moved and seconded from the floor of the Assembly.

**1.02** A resolution is presented to the Assembly by a representative of the Committee with its recommendation.

**1.03** The deadline for submitting a resolution at the Synod Assembly is 1:00 PM on Friday. The Resolutions form can be found at the assembly desk. A resolution must come from an entity named in 1.01 of these Standing Rules.

**1.04** Resolutions may be presented "en bloc" as determined by the Resolutions Committee. Resolutions presented en bloc will be considered together without debate or amendment. Any voting member may remove a resolution from en bloc consideration by submitting notice by 1:00 PM on Friday.

**1.05** Resolutions not addressed by the Synod Assembly, may be acted upon by the Synod Council in accordance with the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions.

### **Special Rules for the Elections**

**2.00** The Assembly shall elect such officers of this Synod and such other persons as the Constitution and bylaws may require, according to procedures set forth in the bylaws. (+S9.01.)

**2.01** In all elections by the Synod Assembly, other than for the bishop, a majority of the votes cast shall be necessary for election. (S9.02.)

**2.02** Whenever nominations are in order, the Nominating Committee will normally provide a minimum of one nominee for each elected position. Nominations may be made by any voting member by submitting a nomination form to the assembly office. Please ensure that any nomination fits the criteria for election prior to submitting the nomination form. Nominations will be made by submitting the Nominations Form by 1:00 pm on Friday to the assembly office.

**2.03** In all elections, except for the bishop, the names of the persons receiving the highest number of legal votes, but not elected by a majority of the legal votes cast on a preceding ballot, shall be entered on the next ballot to the number of two for each vacancy unfilled. On any ballot when only two names appear, a majority of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. (S9.08.)

### **Speaking by Voting Members**

**3.00** When a voting member wishes to speak on a matter before the Assembly, the following procedure should be followed.

- a. Go to a microphone and request the appropriate color card, green to speak in favor of the motion, red to speak against. A white card may be used to indicate a procedural or incidental motion.
- b. Wait to be recognized.
- c. State your name and position (voting member, advisory).
- d. Any motion should be made before speaking to the motion.
- e. Speeches are limited to 2 minutes.
- f. If you make a substantive amendment or one that is long or involved, you must provide a written copy of the motion to the Synod Secretary before the vote is taken if requested by the President.

**3.1** The proposer of a motion has the first opportunity to speak on the motion, if it is debatable.

**3.2** The President will seek to facilitate open and balanced discussion.

### **Amendment of Rules**

**4.00** These rules may be amended at a Synod Assembly when approved by a two-thirds majority vote.

### **Bishop Election Process Standing Rules**

The churchwide representative 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.

The election of a bishop shall be by ecclesiastical ballot. There shall be no spoken nominations from the floor.

Any minister of Word and Sacrament on the roster of the ELCA is eligible for nomination for as synod bishop. A valid ballot is to contain the nominee's full name and any other applicable identifying information. All registered voting members of the South Dakota Synod Assembly shall be eligible to cast a vote.

Three-fourths of the legal votes cast on the first ballot shall be necessary for the election of a bishop.

If no election occurs, the first ballot is the nominating ballot. This ballot becomes the total slate of nominees. The Bishop Election Committee will attempt to contact all nominees identified on the first ballot.

Ministers of Word and Sacrament nominated on the first ballot shall have the right to withdraw their names from subsequent ballots before the casting of the second ballot. A form requesting the name to be withdrawn must be secured from and returned to the Bishop Election Committee by 2:00 pm on Friday, May 30th. This may be done electronically or via phone for candidates not present.

On the second and all subsequent ballots, the order of listing of the nominees on the ballot shall be from the greatest number of ballots cast to the least. Ties shall be listed alphabetically. Three-fourths of the legal votes cast on the second ballot shall be necessary for election.

Following the report of the second ballot, biographical data for the seven nominees (plus ties) who receive the greatest number of ballots cast on the second ballot shall be available to all voting members. Background checks will be conducted for all nominees, to be reviewed by the Bishop Election Committee. Deadline for submitting biographical information by 7:00 pm on Friday, May 30<sup>th</sup>.

Before casting of the third ballot, the seven nominees (plus ties) who receive the greatest number of ballots cast on the second ballot shall be invited to the stage and be introduced by name to the members of the assembly. There shall be no applause before, during, or after each individual introduction.

After time has been allotted for all voting members to review the biographical information of the seven nominees (plus ties), they will be invited to address the assembly on a subject of

their own choosing, with each speech limited to five minutes. If any such person is not present at the assembly, the individual may address the assembly in real time via audio or audiovisual means. 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. There shall be no applause before, during, or after individual speeches; only after all have spoken is there to be such affirmation. There shall be ten minutes' time allocated after these speeches for voting members to engage in prayer, reflection on the speeches, and informal conversation with other voting members before the third ballot is cast.

Two-thirds of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election on the third ballot.

Prior to the fourth ballot for synod 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 Bishop Eaton. The same five questions shall be asked of each of the nominees. Only one nominee shall be in the assembly room at a time. The order that the nominees shall appear on stage to answer the questions shall be determined by the draw of a name. Each nominee shall have a maximum of two minutes to respond to each question. If any nominee is not present at the assembly, that individual may address the assembly in real time via audio or audiovisual means. A timekeeper will indicate to the speaker when 30 seconds remain of the allotted time and when the allotted time has ended. The time for the question-and-answer period shall be a maximum of 45 minutes. There shall be no applause before, during, or after each answer; only after the question-and-answer period has come to an end is there to be such affirmation.

Questions to be asked shall be determined by the Bishop Election Committee. Any voting member of the Synod Assembly may submit questions in writing to the designated location at the Synod Office at the assembly, or via the synod guidebook by 5:00 pm on Friday, May 30th.

Prior to casting the fourth ballot, there will be time for prayer, reflection on the speeches, and informal conversation with other voting members. Sixty percent of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election on the fourth ballot.

On ballots after the fourth ballot, the ballots shall be limited to the two nominees (plus ties) who receive the greatest number of votes cast.

On all subsequent ballots a majority of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election.

The results of each ballot shall be announced to the assembly.

The Bishop Election Committee shall have final authority for all matters pertaining to the election.