



**South-Central Synod of Wisconsin**  
**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**  
God's work. Our hands.

## **Guidance for Submitting a Resolution or Memorial to the 2020 Synod Assembly**

1. RESOLUTIONS OR MEMORIALS MAY BE SUBMITTED BY the Synod Council and other constitutional units, conferences, committees, ministry teams and Task Forces of the synod as recognized by the Synod Assembly; congregations of the synod; or three or more voting members of congregations of the synod.
2. **AS A COURTESY, PLEASE SUBMIT RESOLUTIONS TO THE SYNOD OFFICE BY FEBRUARY 28, 2020** to allow the committee & the office time to prepare resolutions for publication. Resolutions may be submitted by downloading the template from the synod website, completing and returning it to Mr. Gus Knitt, chair of the Reference and Counsel Committee (email [knitt1957@netscape.net](mailto:knitt1957@netscape.net)). You will receive an email confirmation from the Reference and Counsel committee when we receive your resolution. If you do not receive confirmation within (one week) of sending, please contact Chairperson Gus Knitt by email: [knitt1957@netscape.net](mailto:knitt1957@netscape.net).
3. ANY RESOLUTION SUBMITTED AFTER THE DEADLINE will only be considered if it can be demonstrated that there is a compelling reason justifying the inability to have the resolution submitted by the deadline. Late resolutions must also go first to the Reference and Counsel 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 must first pass the assembly by a 2/3rds vote before the resolution is allowed to be considered.
4. THOSE SUBMITTING RESOLUTIONS SHOULD BE PREPARED TO SPEAK in support of adopting their proposed resolution by providing pertinent information not included in the proposed resolution.
5. EACH RESOLUTION OR MEMORIAL MAY REQUEST ACTION FROM ONLY ONE ENTITY; i.e., a document may not ask both a churchwide assembly and the synod to address an issue.
6. IF A RESOLUTION CALLS FOR ADDITIONAL COSTS OR STAFF TIME, the author(s) of the resolution must estimate the cost, and it must indicate the source of the additional funds apart from the synod budget. The resolution, if passed, shall not be put into action until such funding is secured.
7. WHEREAS clauses:
  - a. *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised* (11th ed.), Section 10, page 107, discourages their use. If submitters find them necessary as introduction, there should be as few as necessary. They should be succinct and factual. They should not be argumentative.
  - b. If utilized as introduction, they should briefly describe the reasons for the proposed action in the RESOLVED clauses or provide little-known information including sources for stated facts.
8. RESOLVED clauses:
  - a. If adopted, become the officially worded statement of an action taken by a legislative body.
  - b. Should plainly state the action desired, who is to implement the action, and who is to bear any cost.
  - c. Should give each action a separate RESOLVED.
  - d. Should include proposed wording for any resolution requiring a change in Synod bylaws.

9. Documents should be tested against questions such as:
  - a. Is the information complete and accurate?
  - b. Do the RESOLVED clauses clearly define the proposed course of action?
  - c. Is this a matter which pertains to the life and mission of the Synod or germane to issues on the agenda?
  - d. Does the proposed memorial or resolution address a priority, ministry, or concern of this synod and this church?
  - e. Are the proposed actions feasible and appropriate for the Synod Assembly, Church Council, Churchwide Assembly, or the unit or office that will be addressed?
  - f. Is this document properly labelled a memorial or a resolution? (See next.)

*From the Office of the Secretary of the ELCA:*

### **What is the Difference between a Memorial and a Resolution?**

In 1988, the ELCA Church Council voted that communications from synods to the churchwide organization and the Churchwide Assembly would be made pursuant to ELCA constitutional and bylaw provisions. Essentially, this action affirmed three avenues for communication: (1) Synod Assemblies may address the Churchwide Assembly through memorials; (2) Synod Councils may address the ELCA Church Council through resolutions; and (3) Synod Councils may address churchwide units or offices through the ELCA Church Council's Executive Committee (including forwarding resolutions adopted by Synod Assemblies). Although both memorials and resolutions are requests by a synod for action, they are intended to address different issues and are processed differently.

**Memorials** address broad policy issues and are passed by Synod Assemblies for consideration by the Churchwide Assembly. Synod Councils are not authorized to adopt memorials for submission to the Churchwide Assembly. One of the responsibilities of the Churchwide Assembly, in accordance with provision 12.21.c, in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, is to "[r]eceive and consider proposals from synod assemblies." Once 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, in accordance with bylaw 12.51.02. The Memorials Committee meets approximately six to eight weeks before the Churchwide Assembly.

**Resolutions** are requests from synods to the Church Council or units or offices of the churchwide organization. Either Synod Assemblies or Synod Councils may originate resolutions. Frequently, Synod Councils pass resolutions between meetings of the Synod Assemblies and forward them directly 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. As a practical matter, resolutions have a narrower focus than memorials because they are requests for consideration or action by individual units or offices or the Church Council. 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 resolution and a memorial are *not* to be combined in one action. In addition, a synod should not address both the Church Council and the Churchwide Assembly on the same subject. The Office of the Secretary, with the concurrence of the Executive Committee of the Church Council, may treat a proposal characterized as a memorial as a resolution or vice versa. In these circumstances, the synod will be notified promptly of the re-classification.

It also is important to point out that resolutions and memorials *cannot* direct the churchwide organization to take action. They are proposals *requesting* the specified action.