

THANK YOU FOR SERVING AS A VOTING MEMBER

Purpose - The primary purpose of the convention is to conduct the business of the Southeastern Synod Women of the ELCA. To this end, the synodical board and voting members are expected to be in attendance at all plenary sessions. Participants are welcome to observe the business and be a part of all convention activities.

You have been chosen as a Voting Member, now what?

You are asked to:

- ✦ *Prepare* -- study and be familiar with all materials
- ✦ *Pray* -- ask to be open constantly to the Lord's presence and guidance
- ✦ *Attend* -- all plenary sessions
- ✦ *Act* -- as the Spirit leads you
- ✦ *Listen* -- for special announcements and directions

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR VOTING MEMBERS

- ✦ Prepare for the Convention by reviewing the pre-convention information in this packet and any future emails. (This information on the following pages will be printed and included in your materials when you arrive at Convention.)
 - Nomination Bios will be sent via e-mail prior to the Convention and posted on our website.
- ✦ When you arrive, register at the Registration table. You will receive a special name tag - be sure to wear it during every plenary session.
 - You will not be recognized as a voting member without this nametag.
 - You will receive your Voting Member Notebook.
- ✦ Voting Member Orientation begins promptly at 1:30 pm on Friday afternoon, followed by Convention Orientation at 1:45 pm. The formal opening of the Convention will begin following the opening worship service.
 - ALL Voting members are encouraged to attend.
- ✦ Be on time for all plenary sessions! Voting Member Registration will close five minutes prior to each session.
 - No one will be seated once a plenary session has started.
- ✦ Take notes and gather materials that will assist you in reporting the Convention to your Unit.
- ✦ Turn in the Voting Member Notebook at end of final plenary session.
 - You may keep materials handed out during sessions.

Voting Member seating is at the tables in the front of the room used for plenary sessions. Voting Members will be identified by blue name tags. Voting members are to be seated a few minutes before each plenary session as printed in the agenda so that the required business may be conducted promptly. All voting members should attend the orientation at 1:30 pm on Friday. No substitutions will be allowed after September 1.

PROPOSED RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR THE CONVENTION

1. VOTING MEMBERS

The voting members to be seated at the convention shall include one woman elected by each unit of the Southeastern Synod Women of the ELCA and the elected officers and board members of the Southeastern Synod Women of the ELCA.

2. SEATING OF THE VOTING MEMBERS

Voting members must show their credentials (nametags) to the Committee on Credentials before being seated in the section that is reserved for them. The roll of voting members may not be changed after

3. ATTENDANCE

Voting members shall not absent themselves from any session of the convention without valid excuse. After registering on-site, the voting member can be replaced by the alternate voting member only in the event of an emergency.

4. QUORUM

A majority of the voting members registered with the Committee on Credentials shall constitute a quorum.

5. VOTING PROCEDURE

To be eligible to vote, a voting member must be seated in the designated section. No proxy or absentee voting is permitted.

6. NOMINATIONS

Nominations from the floor for president, treasurer and board member may be made by filing a completed, prescribed form with the secretary prior to the nomination. The forms and information may be obtained from the secretary or chair of the nominating committee. Floor nominations must be signed by two voting members. The person nominated shall have given her consent and indicated her willingness to serve if elected and biographical information and a photo must be made available to all voting members.

7. APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES

- The President shall announce the appointment of participants to the following committees:
- Committee on Claims
- Committee on Credentials
- Committee on Nominations
- Committee on Elections
- Committee on Reference and Counsel

8. CONVENTION BUSINESS AGENDA

The presiding chair of the convention shall be granted the privilege of adjusting the agenda and calling up any items of business she deems necessary in light of schedule and time constraints.

9. MOTIONS AND RESOLUTIONS

1. Any voting member may make a motion or present a resolution from the floor if the motion or resolution is germane to the question under consideration. If any voting member desires to add any item of new business (i.e. a motion or resolution of a general character and not germane to a pending question) she shall:
 - A) Write a motion or resolution on the appropriate form;
 - B) Provide the signatures of five (5) voting members; and

- C) Submit the form to the Committee on Reference and Counsel no later than 12:00 pm on Saturday of the Convention

Any motion necessitating allocation of funds shall be referred to the Executive Committee of the Southeastern Synod Women of the ELCA. The board shall report on such proposed amendments at a subsequent meeting of the Convention, but shall not be required to do so until twenty-four (24) hours have elapsed following the proposal.

The Committee on Reference and Counsel shall report to the convention with its recommendation for handling such new business, which may include a recommendation that the matter not be considered.

10. PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

Seat and voice shall be granted to the bishop of the Southeastern Synod, or the bishop's representative; and to the president of the Churchwide Organization (CWO) or her representative; and others to whom the president of the board shall accord this privilege.

Upon request by a voting member and with the approval of a majority of voting members, a resource person may speak on a pending question. Upon recommendation of the Committee on Reference and Counsel, the convention may seat advisory members who shall have voice but not vote. Visitors are welcome at the convention but are not accorded the privilege of the floor.

11. SPEECHES

All speeches in general discussion, unless otherwise determined by a two-thirds vote of the convention's voting members shall be limited to two (2) minutes. Total debate on any motion will be limited to twelve (12) minutes. Speakers must use the microphone and identify themselves by name, congregational unit, city, and state to be recognized by the chair. Speakers will proceed to the microphone with green cards if speaking in favor of the motion or red cards if speaking against the motion on the floor. The chair shall accept speeches one at a time, alternating those speaking for and against the question. No person shall speak more than twice on the same issue without the consent of the assembly and only after all others have spoken.

12. DISTRIBUTION OF MATERIALS

After the convention is in session, permission to distribute materials not issued from the Executive Committee of the Southeastern Synod Women of the ELCA must be secured from the Committee on Reference and Counsel.

13. PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES

The wearing of promotional buttons or slogans, the distribution of materials or the carrying of placards to promote one candidate over another is not permitted at the convention.

14. GOVERNING LAW

Robert's Rules of Order, latest edition, shall be the governing law of this convention, except as otherwise provided in the standing Rules of Procedure for the Convention, the Constitution and Bylaws of the Women of the ELCA, or the Constitution and Bylaws of the Southeastern Synod Women of the ELCA.

REPORTING THE CONVENTION TO YOUR UNIT

A. Setting the Presentation of this Report

1. Arrange a display of convention material on a table: Bulletin of Reports, special bulletins, programming, etc.
2. If a display board or PowerPoint is available, write titles or names of speakers, elected officers, etc. on it in advance. The presenter can then point to the information as she makes the presentation, making it easier for the audience to grasp names and titles.

B. Presentation of Report

1. General information: Make a statement concerning date, place, setting of convention, Keynote Speaker, and Churchwide Representative.
2. Plenary sessions: Tell briefly about constitutional changes, if any. Refer to printed matter and constitution on display.
3. Election results: Announce the newly elected officers and members of the board.
4. Resolutions adopted should be reported and significant ones read.
5. Inspirational messages: Point out the speakers and share a few statements concerning one or two of the messages that you found meaningful.
6. Special features: Mention all or several of them at least, but describe only two or three of them. It may become tiresome to describe each one. Include special music, opening of convention, installation service, and worship opportunities. Include the workshops you attended.
7. Before you finish, while the members of your unit are hyped up about the convention you attended, be sure to mention the date and location of the convention for the coming year.
8. Conclusion: Close with a prayer for the leadership and for the participants of the Southeastern Synod Women of the ELCA.



WHY WE WRITE RESOLUTIONS

Among the benefits of participating in Women of the ELCA is the opportunity to have a voice in determining the activities and direction of the organization. Where we go and what we do as a churchwide organization and as synodical organizations is very much up to you. That is why we meet in conventions, and at those conventions, we conduct business via resolutions. A resolution should be thought of as:

- A way to participate in the democratic process and have your voice heard;
- A means of educating women about a need or concern;
- A vehicle for inspiring others to take action.

If you are intimidated at the idea of writing a resolution, you shouldn't be. It isn't that difficult. Resolutions are a way to introduce and deliberate business when you assemble a fairly large number of people together. Five people sitting around a table can discuss business one way; 100 people in a banquet hall must conduct business in a more formalized way if they are going to make any progress.

Resolutions are also a way to plan and think ahead, and to hold ourselves accountable for the decisions we make: A resolution, when passed, is no longer an idea to consider—it is a commitment.

SOME GUIDELINES FOR WRITING RESOLUTIONS

The goal of a resolution is to inform and educate the readers so that they are inspired to take action and approve the resolution. Therefore, every resolution should:

- have a clear and concise title.
- address only one issue—call attention to a need for action.
- call Women of the ELCA to action on something it can influence.
- address concerns relevant to Women of the ELCA that relate to our mission, purpose, ongoing activities, triennium theme, triennium focus, or governance.
- propose an action or a solution to a problem.
- be based on sufficient background and analysis. You should be able to back it up.
- provide enough background to give someone with little knowledge of the subject sufficient information to make an intelligent and informed decision.
- be a source of direction, an instrument in planning.

A successful resolution will thus:

- (1) identify and explain what you want to be addressed. This is the WHEREAS portion.
- (2) propose a solution, a plan of action. This is the RESOLVED portion.

THE “WHEREASES”

This first portion of a resolution is a sort of preamble. It consists of declarations of fact that you can support and back up. Opinions are not expressed in this portion of the resolution.

Each fact should be listed as a separate sentence or paragraph that begins with WHEREAS, followed by a semi-colon. The final WHEREAS ends with a semi-colon followed by "therefore be it."

THE “RESOLVEDS”

This second portion of the resolution states the action that you propose to address what you identified in the WHEREAS portion. When writing the RESOLVED section, a guide to keep in

mind is that this section ought to be able to stand on its own—you shouldn't have to refer to the WHEREAS section to understand what is being asked for.

This is the portion of the resolution where the author or authors express opinions. If more than one solution or action is proposed, each separate solution or action should be listed as a separate sentence or paragraph that begins with the word "RESOLVED." When a resolution contains multiple "RESOLVED" statements, they are linked by the phrase "and be it further" at the end of each RESOLVED statement, except for the last one.

THE BACKGROUND SUMMARY

This is the narrative portion of the resolution. It doesn't have to be long, but it should provide the rationale for bringing the resolution forward and include a summary of the facts supporting the resolution. It provides answers to the question, "where did this idea come from?" that go beyond simply the facts provided in the WHEREAS section. This is where you provide some context for your enthusiasm to bring forth the resolution.

SAMPLE RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, this is the part of the resolution that explains the issue or problem; and

WHEREAS, each resolution should address only one issue or problem; and

WHEREAS, each "Whereas" statement should address only one fact, idea or supporting argument related to the issue or problem; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that this is the part of the resolution that restates the basic issue or problem and proposes a solution to the issue or problem identified in the "Whereas" statements; and be it further

RESOLVED, that each "Resolved" statement should address a separate action to be taken or solution proposed to resolve the issue or problem; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the "Resolved" statement should stand alone and the action proposed therein should be clearly understood by the reader without having to refer back to the "Whereas" statements.

SAMPLE RESOLUTION ADDRESSING THE ISSUE OF BROADENING THE SCOPE OF OUR PARTICIPANTS:

Involving young women in Women in of the ELCA in greater numbers

WHEREAS, Women of the ELCA is committed to grow in faith, affirm our gifts, and support one another in our callings;

WHEREAS, Women of the ELCA is called to foster creative programming;

WHEREAS, the Women of the ELCA is called to recruit, prepare and support new leaders; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the _____ synod develop ways to involve young women; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the _____ synod partner with local youth on an annual local servant project; and be it further

RESOLVED, that each cluster of the _____ synod bring at least two young women to the annual convention.



Glossary of Terms

Many common words have specific meanings within Women of the ELCA. Use this glossary to become familiar with these terms. Words that are italicized in the definitions are among the terms defined in this glossary.

Adopt

To choose or accept, and put into effect (by vote or consensus).

Approve

To confirm or sanction formally; to ratify.

Assembly

Term used by the *Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* for the gathering of *voting members* for decision-making or legislative functions.

Biennial convention

A convention held every two years.

Bylaw

A standing rule governing the regulation of the internal affairs of the organization.

Churchwide executive board

The group of board members and officers (all elected by the triennial convention for three year terms) who serve as the board of directors and the interim legislative authority between triennial conventions. The responsibilities of the executive board are spelled out in the Women of the ELCA Constitution and Bylaws, Article XIII, Section 5.

Churchwide women's organization (CWO or Churchwide)

Designated term for the whole organization; an Organization inclusive, less hierarchical term that replaces "national." Manifested in the triennial convention and the churchwide executive board, and used to describe the staff and office that support the activities of the whole organization.

Circle

A non-legislative grouping of women within a unit that comes together for fellowship, Bible study, program or service activities and personal growth. A circle meets regularly and supports the mission and purpose of the organization.

Cluster

A non-legislative grouping of congregational, intercongregational and special units within the territory of a synodical women's organization. Also known as a conference in some synodical women's organizations.

Committee

A group of people, usually appointed by a larger group or legislative body, to define and/or carry out a particular task or respond to an issue.

Conference

A non-legislative grouping of congregational, intercongregational and special units within the territory of a synodical women's organization. Also known as a cluster in some synodical women's organizations.

Congregational unit

A member of Women of the ELCA: a community of women coming together for study, support and action in a local setting of Women of the ELCA (Women of the ELCA Constitution and Bylaws, Article VIII, Section 1); also referred to simply as a unit.

Consensus

General agreement or unanimity; group solidarity in sentiment or belief; a non-formal approach to decision-making.

Constitution

A legal document that outlines the name, purpose, authority, relationship and financial structure of an organization (churchwide organization, synodical women's organization, congregational or intercongregational unit, special unit).

Convention

A *Women of the ELCA* term for a gathering in which *voting members* make decisions or carry out legislative functions.

ELCA

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Executive director

The chief executive officer of the organization; as paid staff, she carries out the policies of the organization and works interdependently with other churchwide units of the *ELCA*; sole employee of the *churchwide executive board*.

Expression

Women of the ELCA has three legislative expressions: *units*, *synodical women's organizations* and the *churchwide women's organization*.

Fiduciary responsibility

The responsibility of a person or organization to handle the finances of and gifts to the organization in a trustworthy manner.

Honorarium

A payment in recognition of acts or professional services.

Intercongregational unit

A *member of Women of the ELCA*; a community of women from two or more congregations coming together for study, support and action locally; also referred to simply as a *unit*.

Job description

An outline that includes title or role, function, term (length) of service, specific responsibilities, budget and resources available (including training, printed or audiovisual materials and mentoring relationships) and guides and directs the ministry or work of an individual or group.

Member

A *congregational*, *intercongregational* or *special unit* of *Women of the ELCA*; units are members, individuals are not; compare with *participant*.

Memorial

A statement of facts presented to a legislative body that is the basis for a petition or request for action; the way in which one organization formally makes a request of another. Brought to a *synodical women's organization convention* by a *unit* or to a *triennial convention* by a *synodical women's organization*.

Network

An interconnected or interrelated group, often with a common identity, cause or circumstance that offers support and facilitates communication and the work of the group.

Parliamentary procedure

The manner in which churchwide and synodical legislative business is conducted; some *units* also use this method.

Participant

A woman who takes part in carrying out the mission of *Women of the ELCA* and supports its ministries. Not all women in an ELCA congregation are automatically participants in Women of the ELCA; only those who take part in carrying out the mission of the organization and support the ministries of Women of the ELCA are participants.

Policy

A statement of principles for action; a position that guides the decision-making and activities of an organization.

Procedure

A particular way or series of ways in which to accomplish something (procedures are both flexible within and limited by the policies of an organization).

Quorum

The number, usually a majority of officers or members of a body, that when duly assembled is legally competent to transact business.

Region

One of nine geographic territories of the *ELCA* comprising a number of synods in the United States and the Caribbean. (We are part of Region 9 which also includes the Virginia, the North Caroline, the South Caroline, and the Florida-Bahamas Synods.)

Resolution

The formal vehicle by which a voting member (or voting members) brings a matter to a convention for action, consistent with the rules of procedure established by that convention.

Robert's Rules of Order

The standard form of parliamentary procedure; a book by this same name that includes the form of parliamentary procedure.

Special committee

A committee appointed by the president or board to bring recommendations on a particular issue, concern, or subject to the board or to carry out a particular project or task.

Special unit

A member of *Women of the ELCA*; a community of women who want to come together in special settings as authorized by the executive board for study, support and action in local settings where congregational affiliation is not readily available or possible; also referred to simply as a unit. An example of this kind of unit would be one organized on a college campus or within a retirement community.

Standing committee

A committee appointed by the president or board to carry on a continuing function.

Synodical women’s organization A legislative and programmatic expression that assists congregational, intercongregational and special units within its territory to fulfill the purpose of *Women of the ELCA*; sometimes referred to as an SWO.

Synodical convention

The *convention* of a *synodical women’s organization*.

Synod

One of the 64 regional and the one non-geographic grouping of congregations of the *ELCA*.

Taskforce

A temporary grouping of individuals or of representatives of groups, established to accomplish a definite objective usually with a specific deadline, and that reports its findings to a larger group or legislative body.

Triennial convention

The convention of *Women of the ELCA*; the highest legislative authority of the organization; meets every three years.

Unit

See congregational unit, intercongregational unit or special unit.

Voting members

Those people who may vote on legislative matters at an *assembly* or *convention*.

Women of the ELCA or WELCA

The shortened form for “Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,” the legal name for the women’s organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; a separately incorporated unit of the *ELCA*.