



18th Annual Synod Assembly
Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA
June 10-11, 2005
Sovereign Performing Arts Center, Reading PA

An Assembly Primer

What Is a Synod Assembly?

The synod assembly is an annual gathering of pastors, associates in ministry, and lay people representing the congregations that make up the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The assembly serves as the synod's highest legislative authority.

The assembly

- receives information and reports;
- elects nominees to leadership positions in the church;
- reaches decisions on matters brought before the assembly;
- sets priorities for the synod's ministry; and
- equips and educates those who attend to interpret the mission of the synod in local ministry settings.

Visitors also attend the assembly to observe and learn. Some assemblies become significant historical events in the life of the church.

What Is Expected of Me as a Voting Member?

You will find that your experience as a voting member of a synod assembly can be a spiritually enriching experience. You will also find that the degree to which this is true for you will depend on your attitude, your own sense of discipleship and commitment, and the manner in which you will conduct yourself before, during, and after the assembly.

It will be most helpful if you--

Prepare -- study and be familiar with all assembly materials.

Pray -- ask to be open constantly to the Lord's presence and guidance and seek the prayers of the congregation and the people you represent.

Attend -- share fully in the assembly's work in plenary, worship, and less formal sessions.

Act -- serve the whole body by your function.

Listen -- special announcements and directions are frequently made during the course of the assembly.

How Can I Participate in the Work of the Assembly?

1. Your nametag is important. Without it you cannot vote.
2. As a voting member you have the privilege to speak to an issue under consideration. You may move, second, or amend any motion. The normal rules of parliamentary procedure apply.
3. Always identify yourself by name and congregation when you speak at one of the floor microphones.
4. Forms are provided on which to write any motion you intend to introduce verbally. The written version must be submitted to the bishop and secretary.
5. The Committee of Reference and Counsel deals with business that does not

relate to the approved agenda. This committee exists to provide guidance and counsel about when and how to bring a matter before the assembly and in what form any motion should be presented.

6. Resolutions germane to the agenda or provided through Reference and Counsel may be written with terse or lengthy prefaces. The purpose of “whereas” clauses is to provide major reasons for acceptance of what is proposed.
7. Voting at this assembly will involve voting cards or voice votes. All elections will be conducted by written ballot.

Who Are Some Key Persons at this Assembly?

You . . . and the other voting members making up the assembly.

Bishop David R. Strobel—who will chair the assembly. Please address him as “Bishop Strobel.”

Ms. Priscilla Schlenker Kinney—vice president of the synod and chair of the synod council.

Associate in Ministry Barbara-Anne G. Taylor—secretary of the synod.

Ms. Sandra Bodnyk—interim treasurer of the synod.

The Rev. Margaret Payne—the bishop of the New England Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Bishop Payne is the churchwide representative to the assembly.

What Matters Will Come Before the Assembly?

The agenda provides detail for each of the assembly’s plenary sessions. Elections, action on financial matters such as the program proposal and 2006 compensation guidelines, and reports from the Committee

of Reference and Counsel will make up the greatest part of the business. There will also be a special session on the proposed recommendations from the ELCA Church Council regarding the ELCA Sexuality Study.

Several guests will be with us at this assembly. The Rev. Leon Novak, pastor of the Lutheran Parish in Murska Sobota, Slovenia, representing the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Slovenia, and Pastor President Alan Eldrid, representing the United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Argentina and Uruguay, will be with us throughout the assembly. We are in a companion synod relationship with the church in Slovenia and the church in Argentina and Uruguay.

Ms Christina Von Bank will represent the ELCA Board of Pensions.

Elections will be conducted for three of the four synod officers, for synod council, and for other positions.

What Can I Do after the Assembly?

Following the assembly you can continue the work of the synod by reporting about the assembly to the members and leaders of your congregation. Your faithful and positive witness will help your congregation see itself as a participant in the synod’s service and ministry.

How should you make your report? You could give a verbal report to those gathered for worship or to those in a Sunday church school class or small group gathering. You could write a newsletter article for your congregational newsletter.

Hopefully you will participate in other assemblies and gatherings of the church in the future. Do consider making yourself available for leadership positions beyond the local congregation.