



21st Annual Synod Assembly  
Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA  
May 29-31, 2008  
Split Rock Resort, Lake Harmony PA

## An Assembly Primer

### What Is a Synod Assembly?

The synod assembly is an annual gathering of pastors, associates in ministry, deaconesses, diaconal ministers, 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 participation.

**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.

**David Hinrichs**—treasurer of the synod.

**The Rev. Kathie Bender Schwich**—the Executive for Synodical and Constituent Relations, ELCA Office of the Presiding Bishop. Pr. Bender Schwich is the church-wide representative to the assembly and will conduct the election for bishop.

### **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 2009

program proposal and 2009 compensation guidelines, and reports from the Committee of Reference and Counsel will make up the greatest part of the business.

Several guests will be with us at this assembly. The Rev. Gary L. Harke, the executive director of the Pennsylvania Council of Churches, will bring greetings on Friday evening.

Ms. Lauren Whipkey will represent the ELCA Board of Pensions.

Elections will be conducted for a new synod bishop, for synod council, for the voting members to the 2009 Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 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.