

Annual Meeting Tip Sheet for Congregational Presidents

Northwestern Minnesota Synod ELCA

Thank you for your leadership! You've chosen to share your gifts for the sake of Christ's mission through the church, and your role as president of your congregation is vital in that work. All public leadership is hard in these often-conflicted times. Know that we stand ready as a synod staff to be of assistance. Don't hesitate to reach out to me (Bishop Tesch) at btesch@cord.edu. You or a designee will chair the annual meeting. I am providing these tips with the hope that they'll be helpful to you and your team as you prepare.

Pray: Invite prayer prior to the meeting from the council and the whole congregation. Begin the meeting with a devotion and prayer, and end with prayer, too.

Review The Constitution: Review your constitution and bylaws in advance of the meeting. Chapter 10 deals with the Congregational Meeting. Chapters 5, 12, and 13 are also worthy of review in preparation.

Purpose of an Annual Meeting: Remember that an annual meeting is about *looking back* (at the previous year of mission and ministry) and *looking ahead* (at the priorities, goals, and initiatives in ministry that you'll pursue in the year to come). Spend some time during the meeting reviewing reports and receiving questions about these reports. Find ways to *celebrate* (e.g., via a PowerPoint slide show) what God has done in your midst over the past year and to *thank* those who have helped lead the congregation.

Voting Membership: As you review your governing documents, take special note of the provisions regarding voting membership and quorums. Please remember that voting members "**are confirmed members, (who) during the current or preceding calendar year, shall have communed in this congregation and shall have made a contribution of record to this congregation**" (from the *ELCA Model Constitution for Congregations*).

Pre-meetings: Consider holding one or two informal informational meetings in advance to review some of the more detailed items that will be on your agenda such as the coming year's budget or mission plan.

Nominations: Work in advance to nominate people for the open leadership positions. Look upon this as a spiritual process. Pray about it, and have the nominating committee do so, too. Let people know

that their name was surfaced through prayer. As you nominate people, **please make sure that you include the election of lay voting members to the 2024 Northwestern Minnesota Synod Assembly to be held Friday, May 17th and Saturday, May 18th at Concordia College.** If you are not sure how many voting members to elect from your congregation, go to the synod website at:

<http://www.nwmnsynod.org/votingmembers>

Plan to Follow Parliamentary procedure: Here's a quick and easy guide to assist you:

https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Parliamentary_Procedure.pdf

Build in Small Group Discussion Times: Consider providing some time for people to get into groups of three or four and provide a few discussion questions such as, "What that we've done together in the past year makes you proud?" "What are your hopes for our church this year?" "What item on the agenda are you most interested in and why?"

Agenda: Prepare an agenda and publicize it in advance of the meeting.

Consideration of the Budget or Mission Plan: Find a creative way to share the budget. Tell a story or two of ministries or accomplishments made possible by people's giving. Be sure to highlight your congregation's mission support and provide one of the several resources we are providing to help your members know the great things they are doing all around the Northwestern Minnesota Synod and the world through their Mission Support.

Statement of Intent and Report of Elections:

Following the meeting, please relay the "Statement of Intent" for your congregation's Mission Support (a copy is included in this mailing), and the report of who was elected to the various officer roles to:

Northwestern Minnesota Synod ELCA, Concordia College, Moorhead MN 56562. You may also download this document at:

<http://www.nwmnsynod.org/statement-of-intent>

Please note that these are available as fillable PDFs which may be completed online and then either printed or saved to your computer and emailed to Cheryl Zeh in the synod office at czeh@cord.edu.