

**Bylaws
of the
West Virginia--Western Maryland Synod**

**2 July 2025
(Amended by Synod Assembly, 5/31/2025)**

(Bylaw Section Numbers Coincide With Constitution Chapter Numbers)

Section I

Reserved For Future Use.

Section II

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Section III

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Section IV

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Section V

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Section VI

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Section VII

The Synod Assembly

B7.01. A notice of the time and place of the Synod Assembly shall be given to all pastors and to the readers of the Bishop's Road Show E-News at least sixty days before the opening day of the assembly.

B7.02. The synod assembly registrar shall prepare in advance of any assembly the roster of voting and advisory members, delivering copies thereof to the secretary and the Committee on Registration and Attendance.

B7.03. The bishop of synod shall appoint the following convention committees:

- Committee on Elections
- Committee on Minutes
- Committee on Reference and Counsel
- Committee on Registration and Attendance
- Committee on Resolutions

- B7.05. Every congregation shall have the right to memorialize the assembly of this synod.
- B7.06. There shall be a division between the voting members and the others on the assembly floor which shall be indicated by a marker(s). Voting members and those persons accorded privilege of seat and voice shall seat themselves in the section in front of the marker(s). All others shall be seated behind the marker(s).
- B7.07. When a voting member is unable to serve, the alternate voting member shall be seated when the Committee on Registration and Attendance has been provided with the necessary information and the alternate has been given a voting member's card.
- B7.08. All retired clergy on the roster of this synod in attendance at the Synod Assembly shall be voting members provided that the voting membership of the Assembly is still 60% laypersons.
- B7.09. Each congregation of the synod shall be apportioned two (2) lay voting members in the Synod Assembly.
- B7.10. All motions, resolutions, amendments, and nominations shall be submitted in writing and on proper forms available from the secretary of synod or the assembly pages. This provision may be waived by the secretary.

Program

- B7.13. All appointments for the conduct of general religious services or public meetings shall be made by the bishop.
- B7.14. The secretary shall post on the synod web site the bulletin of reports at least ten days before each regular Synod Assembly.

Procedures

- B7.16. A resolution of a general character which is not germane to the pending question or report shall be given by the sponsor to a Committee of Reference and Counsel, which shall report thereon to the assembly with its recommendations. Other duties of the committee shall be (a) to recommend special orders for the hearing of representatives, (b) to grant or deny permission to distribute printed matter not issuing from the office of the secretary and (c) to give such assistance to the bishop as may be desired in the course of the assembly.
- B7.17. All reports published in the bulletin of reports shall be received by the assembly by virtue of that fact without vote.

Section VIII Officers

- B8.01. If the vice-president is unable or unwilling to serve as an *ex officio* voting member of the Churchwide Assembly, an alternate lay person of the same gender, meeting all other requirements, may be credentialed by the authority empowered to do so under the governing documents of the of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Section IX

Nominations and Elections

- B9.01. One hundred and twenty (120) days prior to the Synod Assembly, the Nominating Committee shall post on the synod website, shall post on The Bishop's Roadshow, and shall send to the pastors of the Synod a list of the offices and positions to be filled by election under the purview of the Nominating Committee.
- B9.02. Nominations by pastors, congregational councils, conferences, and voting members of synod congregations, along with the vita information requested by the Nominating Committee, shall be sent to the Nominating Committee within thirty days.
- B9.03. The Nominating Committee shall nominate a minimum of two persons for each office and position under its purview to be filled by election by the Synod Assembly, with the exception of the vice president and those positions assigned to young adults, youth, or persons of color and/or primary language other than English, for which the Nominating Committee shall nominate at least one person.
- B9.04. The report of the Nominating Committee, which shall include the names of the committee's nominees with, at minimum, congregational membership and exposition, shall be published on the synod web site at least ten days prior to the assembly.
- B9.05. The Nominating Committee shall include in its report instructions on making floor nominations for all the officers and positions to be elected.
- B9.07. When a nomination is made from the floor, the nominator may provide copies of the completed nomination form (as defined by the nominating committee) to the secretary of the synod for distribution.
- B9.08. In the election of a bishop, balloting may take place by electronic means (such as an online balloting platform) prior to the convening of the Synod Assembly and/or during adjournments of the Synod Assembly at the discretion of the Synod Council, the ballot being sent to those registered as members of the assembly as of midnight the day before the particular ballot; additional rules and protocols may be established by continuing resolution, special rule of order, or convention standing rule.

Section X Synod Council

- B10.01. The Synod Council shall consist of the four officers of the synod, four clergy, six lay members, one youth member, and one young adult.
 - (a) Four pastors shall be elected, one from each of the four conferences.
 - (b) Six lay members shall be elected, one from each of the four conferences and two members at large.
 - (c) The youth member shall be elected at large. The youth member shall not have reached the age of 18 at the time of election.
 - (d) The young adult member shall be elected at large. The young adult member shall be between (and inclusive of) the ages of 18 and 30 at the time of election.
- B10.02. Terms of office:
 - (a) Four clergy, six lay members, and the young adult member shall be elected for a three-year term and shall not serve for more than two consecutive terms in that seat.

- (b) The youth member shall be elected to a one-year term without term limitation.
 - (c) The term for members of Synod Council shall begin on the first day of the third month following election or, in special circumstances, at a time designated by the Synod Council.
- B10.03. The Synod Council shall meet in regular session at least twice a year. Any additional meeting(s) shall be by call of the vice president, the bishop, the presiding bishop of the ELCA, or petition by $\frac{1}{3}$ of the voting members of the council.
- B10.04. The president of the synodical women's organization or her appointee will serve as an advisory member of the Synod Council with voice, but without vote.
- B10.05. The Synod Council shall have an Executive Committee composed of the officers and three members of the council (1 clergy, 2 lay members) elected by the council. The Executive Committee shall counsel with the officers and shall perform those functions of the Synod Council assigned to it by the Synod Council. The Executive Committee, with the exception of the bishop of this synod, shall review the work of the bishop, assistants to the bishop and support staff of the synod and shall recommend salaries and benefits for the bishop, assistants to the bishop and support staff of the synod.
- B10.08. Synod Council may, at the discretion of the chair, employ mail (including asynchronous telecommunications) voting so long as all members have been notified of the call for vote and have acknowledged that call for vote, a unit veto striking down the question.

Section XI

Committees, Commissions and Other Organization Units

- B11.01. There shall be a Consultation Committee consisting of twelve (12) persons.
- B11.03. The Synod Council shall appoint members to the joint Candidacy Committee of the Southwest Pennsylvania Synod and the West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod according to the provisions of the agreement between the synods as amended from time to time and ratified by the Synod Council, said committee being established to fulfill the duties outlined in the Candidacy Manual of the ELCA.
- B11.07. There shall be such additional committees as deemed necessary by this synod to guide and support the ministry of the synod and its congregations in the various aspects of the Church's mission. Such committees shall normally be created or disbanded by continuing resolution of the Synod Council, but nothing herein shall preclude the right of the Synod Assembly to create or disband such committees by either continuing resolution or bylaw.
- B11.12. Vacancies upon committees, commissions, and boards shall be filled by the Synod Council. Vacancies may occur through resignations, death, or by a chairperson declaring a vacancy upon a committee, commission, or board after two unexcused absences by a member.
- B11.15. The synod bishop or the bishop's appointee, if requested by the synodical women's organization, will serve as the representative of the synod to the synodical women's organization and will provide reports to the board meetings and conventions of the synodical women's organization.
- B11.16. The term for members of standing committees elected by Synod Assembly shall begin on the first day of the third month following election or, in special circumstances, at a time designated by the Synod Council.

B11.17. The bishop or the vice president may call a special meeting of any committee, commission, or board.

B11.18. Committees, Commission, and Boards of the Synod may conduct meetings by telecommunications and employ mail voting under the same rules as apply to Synod Council.

Section XII

Conferences, Clusters and Coalitions

Designations

B12.01. There shall be four conferences designated as follows:

- (a) Monongahela Valley - Mountain Conference
 1. Bittering MD, Emmanuel
 2. Jennings MD, Zion
 3. Swanton MD, St. John's (Meadow Mountain)
 4. Clarksburg WV, St. Mark
 5. Davis WV, St. John
 6. Elkins WV, Holy Trinity
 7. Fairmont WV, Grace
 8. Grafton WV, Church of the Covenant
 9. McHenry MD, Shepherd of the Hills
 10. Morgantown WV, St. Paul
 11. New Milton WV, St. Johannes
 12. Oakland MD, St. Mark's
 13. Accident MD, St. Paul's
 14. Accident MD, St. John's (Cove)
 15. Friendsville MD, Grace
 16. Aurora WV, St. Paul
 17. Redhouse MD, St. John's
- (b) Ohio - Kanawha Valley Conference
 1. Beckley WV, St. Luke
 2. Charleston WV, Trinity
 3. Huntington WV, Christ the King (Barboursville)
 4. Huntington WV, St. Paul
 5. Hurricane, WV, Cross of Grace
 6. New Haven WV, St. Paul
 7. Point Pleasant WV, St. Peter
 8. Parkersburg WV, First
 9. Vienna WV, Christ
- (c) Potomac Conference
 1. Martinsburg WV, St. John
 2. Martinsburg WV, Trinity
 3. Charles Town WV, St. Thomas
 4. Harpers Ferry WV, St. John
 5. Petersburg WV, Grace
 6. Baker WV, Zion
 7. Gore VA, Fairview
 8. Rio WV, Ebenezer
 9. Wardensville WV, St. Peter
 10. Yellow Spring WV, Hebron

11. Franklin WV, Faith
12. Minnehaha Springs WV, New Hope
13. Moyers WV, St. John
14. Upper Tract WV, Mt. Hope
15. Brandywine WV, Calvary
16. Keyser WV, Trinity
17. Shepherdstown WV, St. Peter
18. Uvilla WV, St. James
- (d) Upper Ohio Valley Conference
 1. Wheeling WV, First English
 2. Wheeling WV, Christ (Mozart)
 3. Wheeling WV, Grace (Bethlehem)
 4. Wheeling WV, St. James
 5. Wheeling WV, St. Mark (Elm Grove)
 6. Weirton WV, Trinity
 7. Wheeling WV, Trinity
 8. Moundsville WV, Messiah
 9. New Martinsville WV, Good Shepherd

Compositions and Functions

- B12.02. Purpose: The conferences shall exist for the purpose of fostering interdependent relationships among congregations, institutions, synodical and churchwide units, and adjacent groups in neighboring synods.
- B12.03. Conference Polity: The Synod Council shall establish the governing structure of each conference through continuing resolutions.
- B12.04. Deans: Deans will be appointed by the bishop in consultation with the pastors of the conference and reviewed annually. Deans are extensions of the bishop's office in the local setting. The bishop shall consult with the church council(s) of a dean to negotiate specific time for the dean to devote to his/her duties, with a recommendation minimum of one day per month. Deans will not be paid for the performance of their duties, but expenses will be reimbursed by the synod. A dean's primary duty will be to assist the bishop in providing pastoral care to pastors and congregations.
- B12.05. Presbyterian Collegiality: The pastors and the dean of each conference will develop methods for promoting collegiality.
- B12.06. Clusters: Clusters of congregations may be established, as needed, to further support and to inter-relate ministries of local congregations. Clustering of congregations shall not be limited to geographic proximity. Clustering of congregations could be determined by size, by single or multiple church parishes, the setting of congregations for ministry and other factors that would foster such relationships. Clusters may continue as long as needs exist. Clusters of congregations may not be limited by conference or synodical boundaries.

Section XIII

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Section XIV

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Section XV

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Section XVI

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Section XVII

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