



Allegheny Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

On The Way Together with a Renewing Spirit

"Speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love."

- Ephesians 4:15b-16

2025 Synod Assembly

37th Annual Assembly

October 31-November 1, 2025

Altoona, PA

Bulletin of Reports

**Annual Assembly of the
Allegheny Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

Blair County Convention Center, Altoona, PA
October 31 – November 1, 2025

On the Way Together with
“A Renewing Spirit”

“Speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body’s growth in building itself up in love.”

Ephesians 4:15b-16

Assembly offerings are designated for:
Lutheran Disaster Relief for Flooding & Lutheran Campus Ministry at Penn State



Allegheny Synod

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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Allegheny Synod

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Section One

Introduction

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37th Annual Assembly of the Allegheny Synod Draft Agenda:

Friday, October 31: Reformation Day

7:30 am **Registration desk opens**

8:00 am **Refreshments available**

9:00 am **Opening Worship with Opening of the Assembly - see worship booklet**

10:15 am **Plenary I**

 Welcome and Introduction of Guests

***10:15 - Registration closes for credentials for the first ballot for Bishop**

 Practice with Electronic Voting App

 Report of a quorum: Pr. Becky Horn, Secretary of the Synod

 Adoption of 2025 Assembly Agenda (pg. 6 ff)

 Acceptance of 2024 Assembly Minutes (pg. 59 ff)

 Adoption of the Synod Assembly Rules of Procedure (pg 8 ff)

10:30 am Credentials Report from the Registrar: Debbie Garritano

 Bishop's Elect Process and First Ballot [Ecclesiastical Ballot]

10:45 am Break

11:00 am Report of Nominations: Paula Nihoff

11:10 am Report of Reference and Counsel

11:20 am Elections Committee: First Ballot for Vice President, Synod Council, Consultation
 Committee, and Discipline Committee

11:35 am Recognition of Rostered Leaders' Anniversaries

11:50 am Report of the Synod Vice President: Ann Ferry

 Report of the First Ballot for Bishop

***Withdrawals from the ballot must be received by 1:00 pm - forms are available from
 Synod Secretary, Pr. Becky Horn**

***Those leaving their name on the ballot, please complete/update your biographical
 information by 1:00 pm and give/email that to Michelle.**

12:00 pm Prayer and Instructions for Lunch

 Recognition of Congregation Anniversaries

1:00 pm **Plenary II**

***Withdrawals must be received by this time, as well as updated biographical information
 from those remaining on the ballot.**

1:10 pm Report of the Synod Secretary: Pr. Becky Horn (pg. 47 ff)

1:20 pm Elections Committee: Second Ballots, if needed

1:25 pm Ministry Partner Presentation from Rev. Tara Lynn, Portico (pg. 119)

1:30 pm ***Registration closed for credentials for the second ballot for Bishop**

 Report of the ELCA Churchwide Representative, Lori Fedyk

1:50 pm Credentials Report from the Registrar: Debbie Garritano

 Second Ballot for Bishop is cast

2:00 pm Stretch Break

Draft Agenda (*continued*):

2:10 pm	Report of the Second Ballot for Bishop [top 7, plus ties, move on]
2:15 pm	Report of the Director for Evangelical Mission: Sue Ellen Spotts (pg. 43/93)
2:30 pm	Report of the Director of Go Tell It IN The Mountains: Pr. John Kratz (pg. 44 ff)
2:45 pm	Top Seven Nominees Address the Assembly
3:15 pm	Short Break for reflection and discernment
3:25 pm	Credentials Report from the Registrar: Debbie Garritano Third Ballot for Bishop is cast
3:30 pm	Report of the Third Ballot for Bishop
3:40 pm	Report of the Synod Treasurer and Finance Team: Paula Nihoff and Pr. Traci Marriot (pg 65 ff)
4:00 pm	Reformation Day Evening Prayer - see worship booklet

***The Assembly will resume at 9:00 am on Saturday, November 1.**

The top three candidates for Bishop, plus ties, will move on in the election process.

Saturday, November 1: All Saints Day

7:30 am	Registration desk opens
8:00 am	Refreshments available
9:00 am	Plenary III All Saints' Day Morning Prayer - see worship booklet
9:30 am	Ministry Partner Presentation from Dn. Alicia Anderson, Campus Ministry (pg. 110)
9:40 am	Report of the Interim Bishop: Bishop Barb Collins (pg. 39)
9:50 am	Report of the Assistant to the Bishop: Pr. Kevin Shock/ULS Pres. Guy Erwin (pg. 135)
10:00 am	Top Three Nominees Address the Assembly
10:30 am	Break
10:45 am	Credentials Report from the Registrar: Debbie Garritano Fourth Ballot for Bishop is cast
10:50 am	Ministry Partner Presentation from Pr. Nathan Pile, Camp Sequanota (pg. 124 ff)
11:00 am	Report of the Fourth Ballot for Bishop Fifth Ballot for Bishop is cast Brief pause for calculations Report of the Fifth Ballot for Bishop
11:10 am	Bishop-elect's Remarks to the Assembly
11:20 am	Reference and Counsel Parting Resolutions Unfinished Business Closing Worship (see worship booklet) with Installation of Deans, Remembrance of Faithful Departed, and Closing of the Assembly

SHALOM

Rules of Procedures for the Allegheny Synod Assembly for 2025:

General Procedures:

1. The Bishop, chair of the Assembly, shall designate which sections of the auditorium, if any, are reserved for voting members. Microphones will be located in the aisles of these sections for the use of voting members. Visitors shall sit in the sections designated by the chair.
2. The privilege of voice and vote is extended to all Ministers of Word and Sacrament and Ministers of Word and Service on the roster of the Allegheny Synod, members of Synod Council, and Voting Members from congregations. (S7.21., S7.28.)
3. The privilege of seat and voice are given to: The Presiding Bishop of the ELCA and any other official representative of the church, recognized lay professional leaders, non-voting members of task forces and committees in connection with their reports, committee chairpersons, representatives of institutions and agencies related to this Synod, and youth of this Synod.
4. Alternate voting members and visitors are welcome to the Assembly. They shall be seated in sections of the auditorium as directed by the chair of the Assembly. They may be permitted to speak only by a two-thirds vote of the Assembly. They are not permitted to vote.
5. Those addressing the chair should use a microphone and should state their name and home congregation.
6. In all plenary sessions, speeches from the floor shall be limited to three minutes. No person shall speak more than twice on the same questions, except by consent of the Assembly. This rule shall not apply to persons presenting a report nor when direct questions are posed to specific individuals for clarification.
7. All motions, other than routine ones, shall be written in advance by the mover on a form provided for that purpose, signed, and sent to the secretary's desk prior to its presentation. No motion shall be debated on the floor until a written copy is in the hands of the chair.
8. When there is much discussion on any motion for and against, the chair will recognize alternately persons making pro and con statements.
9. Robert's Rules of Order, latest edition, shall be the governing parliamentary law of this Assembly, except as otherwise provided in the Synod's Constitution and Bylaws. A parliamentarian will be appointed to rule on procedure. A quick reference to Robert's Rules of Order follows these rules and procedures.

Election Procedure:

1. In ALL elections, other than for the bishop, a majority of the votes cast is needed for election. The names of the persons receiving the highest number of votes, but not elected by a majority of votes cast on the preceding ballot, shall be entered on the next ballot, two in number for each vacancy.
2. Election of a bishop is found in the Allegheny Synod Constitution, S9.04 (below)
 - a. The bishop shall be elected by the Synod Assembly by ecclesiastical ballot. Three-fourths of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election on the first ballot. If no one is elected, the first ballot shall be considered the nominating ballot. Three-fourths of the legal votes cast on the second ballot shall be necessary for election. The third ballot shall be limited to the seven persons (plus ties) who received the greatest number of legal votes on the second ballot, and two-thirds of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. The fourth ballot shall be limited to the three persons (plus ties) who receive the greatest number of legal votes on the third ballot, and 60 percent of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. On subsequent ballots a majority of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. These ballots shall be limited to the two persons (plus ties) who receive the greatest number of legal votes on the previous ballot

continued

Rules of Procedures for the Allegheny Synod Assembly for 2025 (*continued*):

Report:

1. The results of each ballot in every election shall be announced in detail to the Assembly.
2. When constitutional changes are required provisions from the ELCA, the Synod secretary may change the constitution immediately upon formal certification from the Secretary for the Church.
3. When the Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA has amended the model constitution for synods, amendment of the constitution of the Allegheny Synod may reflect such changes by simple majority vote.
4. Other amendments to the Synod Constitution may be adopted by a two-thirds vote at a regular meeting of the Synod Assembly after movement and presentation in writing, with ten signatures at a prior Assembly.

Officers elected at the October/November Assembly will assume legal responsibility for their office on February 1 following the election.

Other Procedures:

1. A Committee on Reference and Counsel shall be appointed by the chair at the opening session of the Assembly. The committee:
 - a. Shall receive resolution(s) not germane to matters before the Assembly.
 - i. The committee shall review those resolutions and transmit them to the Assembly with one of the following recommendations:
 - I. that the Assembly consider the resolution. If the committee recommends that the Assembly consider the resolution, the committee may also recommend:
 - II. that the Assembly pass the resolution;
 - III. that the Assembly defeat the resolution;
 - IV. that the Assembly amend the resolution in a specific manner
 - V. that the Assembly refer the resolution to the Synod Council, a committee of the synod, or some other defined group for its consideration;
 - VI. that the Assembly does not consider the resolution.
 - ii. Shall state its reasons for its recommendations if it recommends anything other than that the Assembly considers the resolution.
 - iii. Shall determine if a resolution submitted after the pre-assembly deadline is of imminent concern.
 - I. Resolutions of imminent concern would include any resolutions pertaining to issues which call for attention or action prior to issues which call for attention or action prior to the next regularly scheduled assembly of this synod.
 - b. May edit resolutions and the committee may combine similar resolutions to expedite the work of the assembly, but the committee shall not change the substance of any resolution.
 - c. May consult with the author of a resolution and encourage them to take action that would not bring the resolution to the assembly.
 - d. In consultation with the chair, shall recommend the order in which resolutions are transmitted to the assembly. Whenever possible, resolutions of a similar nature should be present consecutively.
 - e. May recommend that a resolution be considered as a special order.
 - f. May grant or deny permission to distribute printed matter not introduced on the floor of the assembly.
 - g. Shall give assistance to the chair as requested by the chair during the assembly.
2. Anyone wishing to distribute printed matter not introduced on the floor as part of a report to the assembly or as part of the business of the assembly must receive the approval of the Committee on Reference and Counsel before distributing the material.

continued

Rules of Procedures for the Allegheny Synod Assembly for 2025 (*continued*):

In recent years the following two proposals have been presented as motions for the assembly that is in session. However, the Synod Council may establish a process to grant ministers of word and sacrament from communion partners to be given voice and vote for assemblies. (S7.27.) The following Resolutions have been passed by the Allegheny Synod Council, negating the need to vote on these items each year.

S.7.27.A25 All Ministers of Word and Sacrament on the roster of a church body with which the ELCA has declared a Full-Communion partnership (relationship), serving calls to congregations of this synod, shall be given voice and vote as voting members of the Allegheny Synod Assembly.

S7.27.B25. All Vicars (Interns, TEEM Candidates, etc.) serving in ELCA congregations of the Allegheny Synod shall be given voice and vote as voting members of the Allegheny Synod Assembly.

It has also been noted in S7.22. that the synod may establish processes that permit retired rostered ministers, those granted disability status, or on leave of call, on the roster of the synod to serve as voting members. If processes are not established, such persons shall have voice but not vote. As such, the Allegheny Synod Council makes the recommendation to approve the following bylaws (these will need a 2/3 vote of the Synod Assembly):

S7.22.01. All Ministers of Word and Sacrament retired, disabled, or on leave from call, on the roster of this synod shall be given voice and vote as voting members of the Allegheny Synod Assembly.

S7.22.02. All Ministers of Word and Service retired, disabled, or on leave from call, on the roster of this synod shall be given voice and vote as voting members of the Allegheny Synod Assembly.

Quick Reference to Robert's Rules of Order:

For Synod Assembly Voting Members

Purpose:

Robert's Rules provide an orderly way for large groups to do business. Knowing a few key motions helps voting members participate fully, share opinions, and make decisions fairly.

Roles:

The Chair

- Maintains order with advice of the parliamentarian
- Ensures fair discussion of all germane motions
- Calls for speakers pro and con
- Clarifies meaning of actions to be voted on
- Determines readiness to vote (unless Assembly votes otherwise)
- Remains neutral; may not debate while presiding

Voting Members

- Cooperate with the chair in keeping good order
- Prepare motions/resolutions carefully
- Speak concisely and to the point
- Use rules to promote—not block—discussion

Common Motions:

1. **Adopt Agenda** – Simple majority; sets order of business (2/3 to amend later).
2. **Amend Main Motion** – Simple majority; changes wording of a motion.
3. **Amend the Amendment** – Simple majority; only one allowed at a time.
4. **Substitute** – Simple majority; replaces a paragraph or entire motion.
5. **Commit/Refer to Committee** – Simple majority; for study or action by committee.
6. **Consider by Paragraph/Seriatim** – Simple majority; debate/vote section by section.
7. **Limit or Extend Debate** – 2/3 vote; shortens or lengthens debate time.
8. **Division of the House** – Any member may request a counted or visible vote.
9. **Table** – Simple majority, not debatable; postpones consideration until taken up again.
10. **Close Nominations** – 2/3 vote, not debatable.
11. **Postpone** – Simple majority; delays decision until later.
12. **Previous Question** – 2/3 vote, not debatable; ends debate, moves to vote.
13. **Reconsider** – Simple majority; must be made by someone who voted with the prevailing side.
14. **Point of Order** – No vote; challenges procedure or ruling of the chair.
15. **Point of Information** – No vote; asks a factual question about the business at hand.
16. **Question of Privilege** – No vote; addresses immediate needs (hearing, lighting, comfort).