



Metropolitan Chicago Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

Voting Member Handbook 2021

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Please click on the links below to go directly to each section of the voter handbook.

Welcome to Synod Assembly 2021	2
Assembly Agenda	3
Tech Support	4
Voting Member Responsibilities	5
Rules Of Organization & Procedure (link)	9
Zoom Etiquette	11
Business Items For 2020	12
Special Committees For The 2021 Assembly	13
Resources	14
MC Synod Constitution	14
Glossary Of Terms	15



Welcome to Synod Assembly 2021

Based on 1 Peter 4:10 *Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received, this year's assembly will dwell upon the theme of **Good Stewards**.* The selection of this theme is an invitation for us to reflect on God's grace and goodness and to be moved by the gifts of God into deeper relationships with God, our neighbors, and the world around us.

As we gather virtually, some of us come tired. Some are hungry and thirsty, while some among us arrive yearning to experience God's grace anew. At the same time, many, perhaps, show up surprised--overwhelmed by the holy opportunities that lie before them, wondering what God will do next. From whatever emotional and physical spaces we inhabit, as we come together, we'll no doubt discover together how grace and struggle, mission and ministry, have interacted among us this past year. Shared testimonies will empower and equip us to be God's stewards in a world hungry and thirsty for renewal and hope.

While this year's gathering in an all-digital format is new and different, our assembly's purpose remains the same: to gather together in faith, as representatives of the congregations of our synod to conduct necessary business and celebrate our shared mission: **In Jesus' Name. Proclaim the Gospel – Make Disciples – Do Justice.**

The work we do together as the Metropolitan Chicago Synod takes all of us—members and ministers, small and large congregations, rural and urban churches. The pandemic has not stopped us from doing God's work. Throughout these trying times, our congregations, ministry partners, and synod leaders have all learned to be creative, adaptive and innovative. Now more than ever, we are called to show up, build a bigger table, and remember that the church is more than a building—it's a community.

The work of our synod takes ALL OF US. Though this year's virtual assembly will not be "the same," as gathering in person, we trust that it will be good, nonetheless. As we venture into this new realm of assembling virtually together, we ask for your grace as we navigate new technologies, encounter new stumbling blocks, and approach unforeseen opportunities and possibilities together.

Welcome!



Assembly Agenda

DATE: Saturday, June 5, 2021

TIME: 7:00 - 8:20am

Voting Member Check-In

*For credentialing purposes, voting members will need to “check-in” to each plenary session. The waiting room will open one hour and half prior to the opening session. Voting members will be admitted on a first-come-first-served basis. Once checked-in you can go about your morning routine while remaining logged in through your device. It's like saving your seat in an in-person assembly. You can regroup online at 8:20 am in time for the opening session at 8:30 am. **Once a plenary session has been called to order, no additional voting members will be admitted to that particular plenary session.***

AGENDA

- Session is called to order
- Announcements and Welcome
- Opening Litany
- 2020 Business
- 2021 Assembly
 - Approve the Agenda and Rules of Procedure
 - Celebrating the mission and ministry of Metropolitan Chicago Synod
 - Elections
 - Vice President
 - Secretary
 - General Ballot
 - 2022 Churchwide Assembly Voting Members
 - Synod Council
 - Committee on Discipline
 - Committee on Consultation
 - Bishop's Report
 - Vote on the 2021 Budget
 - Vote on the Constitutional Amendments
 - Reports
- Closing Litany



Tech Support

If you experience issues **DURING** the assembly, please contact:

List here the call in number:

or you can email:

Ivan Perez

taino869132@gmail.com

Bob Schordje

bobschordje@aol.com

Jim Valentine

jvalentine@oursaviours.org

Others?

Please do **NOT** call the synod office during the assembly – no one will be there.



Voting Member Responsibilities

1. **ARRANGE FOR TECHNOLOGY AND AN INTERNET CONNECTION TO PARTICIPATE.**

Voting members need:

- A quality and stable internet connection
- An email address unique for each voting member
- A web-based device to participate from that offers both video and sound functionality.
 - o A desktop/laptop computer is the most user friendly. A tablet or mobile device will work, but can be a little trickier to navigate.
 - o Ideally, for credentialing and balloting purposes, each voting member should use an individual device AND an individual/unique email address.
 - o For those planning to gather as a small group to participate in the assembly, or where multiple people from the same family will be participating together via the same device – during the tech check sessions below there will be a special segment about best practices for a seamless voting member experience. It is definitely possible, just requires a bit of additional planning.

Voting Members will utilize the Zoom platform.

Voting members will vote via both a web-based balloting website (e-Ballot).

For the web-based balloting, those credentialed for that session will be emailed the invitation to vote when the voting window has opened.

All voting members are strongly encouraged to participate in at least ONE orientation session. During the session, participants will be able to test out voting applications, learn more about the rules of procedure and how to request speaking privileges during the assembly.

ORIENTATION SESSIONS:

May 15, 22 or 29, 10-11 am

Links for these sessions are available on the [synod assembly website](#). No registration needed! Simply click on the link for the date you want to attend to join the meeting.

Each session will be identical so there is no need to participate in more than one session.



For those who can't attend a Saturday morning session, a recording of the May 15th session will be posted on the Synod Assembly website.

Participating in this session will help ensure everyone has a quality and efficient experience during the assembly. While we will have tech assistance available during the assembly, it is not possible for them to assist all 650+ voting members at one time!

2. STUDY THE PRE-ASSEMBLY MATERIALS

Voting members will be sent the following documents via email a couple weeks prior to Assembly. Please review in preparation for voting in the assembly.

1. Book of Report - The 2021 Budget Report
2. Biographical information on nominees on the general ballot
3. Proposed Rules of Procedure
4. Proposed Synod Constitutional Amendments

3. REQUEST VOTING MEMBER CREDENTIALS

Credentials is a fancy title for voting member check-in. If we were gathering in-person, you would complete this process by picking up your name badge. This is how check-in will look this year:

STEP 1: BEFORE THE SYNOD ASSEMBLY:

Voting Members will need to:

- Watch out for an email invitation to verify your credentials. Once you submit your request, your registration will be confirmed against the paid voting member registration list.
- Upon verification that you are indeed a registered voting member, you will receive an email from zoom with your login credentials. You should receive this confirmation within 24 hours of submitting your request. Depending on your email privacy settings, this may go into your spam or junk folders. **If you cannot locate your request, please contact _____ or _____ before noon on Thursday, June 3.**
- Each voting member will receive a unique link to use to enter the zoom platform. **Only one device will be allowed to connect via that link at any one time. Do not share your link with anyone else.**



STEP 2: DURING THE SYNOD ASSEMBLY:

If we were gathered together in-person, you'd likely arrive early to claim your spot. Good news – every seat this year is a good one and offers an unobstructed view of the screen! 😊 You're still going to want to allow plenty of time to get connected and settled before each plenary session. Here's what the process will look like this year:

Between **7:00 and 8:20 am, June 5**, sign in to the Assembly using the credentials you have been sent in advance.

Do NOT wait until the last minute to sign in! Sign in as close to 7:00 am as you can to avoid last minute problems.

Once the Bishop has called the Assembly to order, no additional participants will be admitted.

So if you are late in checking in, your only (non-voting) option for participating will be to view the Assembly from the Facebook link

Helpful tips:

- check in early so you have plenty of time to get settled. Once you're admitted, grab some coffee, take a walk around the block, pray. Don't wait until the last minute and risk losing your chance to participate and vote in that session's business.
- once you are admitted into the Zoom platform for the day – there is no need to exit. Simply mute and turn your camera off when we break.

If you have technical connection issues and need to exit and re-join a session, you will be readmitted, provided you had been admitted prior to the session being called to order.

4. COME TO THE ASSEMBLY WITH AN OPEN MIND, OPEN HEART AND READINESS TO LEARN AND GROW TOGETHER AS WE NAVIGATE THIS HOLY EXPERIMENT.

In the true sense of the word synod, we are “walking-together” through this new way of gathering and learning together! Patience and grace will make this a faithful experience for everyone!



5. PARTICIPATE

Participate in all legislative actions. If any issue is not clear, using the chat feature, ask the chair for clarification.

6. SHARE

Share the information and actions of the assembly with your congregation after the assembly. This can be done by verbal or written report, or both. Help your congregation to know about their work of ministry beyond your local parish.



10. **ELECTIONS:** For Vice President and Secretary

- A. Election of the Vice President and Secretary shall proceed without oral nominations. The first ballot of the election, unless resulting in election, shall be the nominating ballot. On the first ballot, two-thirds of votes shall elect. On the second ballot, only votes for persons who received votes on the first ballot shall be valid, and a majority of votes shall elect. On the third ballot, voting shall be limited to the two persons (plus ties) who received the highest number of votes on the second ballot, and a majority of votes shall elect. (§9.05.01 and §9.06.01)
- B. Those nominated for Vice President on the first ballot must be a lay person of this synod. Those nominated for Secretary may be either a rostered minister (pastor or deacon) or lay person of this synod.
- C. Voting members should have as much of the following information available for the nominating ballot:

Name:
Congregation:
Phone Number:
Other identifying information:

11. **ELECTIONS:** For elections other than for Vice President or Secretary

- D. The Nominating Committee shall present a slate of candidates for each vacancy to be filled by election (§9.01.01).
- E. Any voting member may submit a nominations for open positions in writing by email to kseverson@mcselca.org **no later than 10:00 p.m. on Friday, May 14.** If you plan to nominate an individual, it is advised that you visit with the person your nominating to confirm their willingness and eligibility to serve.



- F. All elections shall be by ballot. Except where otherwise stipulated a simple majority of votes cast on any ballot shall elect.

- G. If more than two persons are nominated for any position and there is no election on the first ballot, the candidate receiving the lowest number of votes will be dropped from the next ballot—and this procedure will be following through subsequent ballots until a candidate receives a simple majority vote.

- H. The results of each ballot in every election shall be announced in detail to the assembly.

12. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** Upon the adjournment of the Synod Assembly, all remaining unfinished items of business shall be referred to the Synod Council for disposition.



Zoom Etiquette

- 1) Each Voting Member will receive a zoom link to join the meeting. Each unique link can only be used on one device at a time. Do not share your link with anyone.

If you are unable to locate your link, please contact Pr. Sunitha Mortha at smortha@mcselca.org by Thursday, June 3.

- 2) Mute yourself at all times when not called on to speak. This helps everyone have a quality experience.

The chat feature is reserved for official assembly business – requesting speaking privileges, ask clarifying questions, making motions, etc. The Chat feature will be monitored so that any question or business added to the chat can be quickly relayed by our tech team to the chair.



Business Items For 2020

Known items of business for this assembly are listed below. Other items may yet arise from Executive Committee recommendation and Synod Council recommendation.

1. Opening & Closing 2020 synod assembly

2. Elections: the voting members of the 2021 Synod Assembly will elect:

- Synod Vice-President
- Synod Secretary
- Synod Council Members
- Committee on Discipline
- Committee on Consultation
- 2022 Churchwide Assembly Voting Members

The nominees have surfaced from the synod nominating committee, from conference meetings, or through general nominations. The deadline for additional nominees for these vacancies is 10pm on Friday, May 14. Nomination forms can be found at <https://mcselca.org/who-we-are/synod-assembly/> and are to be submitted to kseverson@mcselca.org

3. Pass the 2021 Budget

4. Pass the synod constitutional amendments

5. Other business matters:

[Approval of the 2019 SYNOD ASSEMBLY MINUTES](#)

Registration links for these sessions are available on the [synod assembly website](#). After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

Recordings of these sessions will also be available on the synod assembly website if you're unable to participate in real time.



Special Committees For The 2021 Assembly

A special THANK YOU to the many people who made this year's assembly come together!

MINUTES COMMITTEE

Rev, Erin Clausen

SYNOD ASSEMBLY PLANNING TEAM

Rev. Sunitha Mortha - Staff and Co-planner
Jim Valentine - Co-planner & Tech Team
Hope Johnson - Young Adult planner in training
Rev. Tom Gulke - Staff & Communications
Nancy Valladolid - Staff & Video
Ivan Perez - Tech Team
Bob Schordje - Tech team
Heather Haynes - Staff & Assembly support
Tom Anderson - Staff & Finances
Rev. Immanuel Karunakaran - Extern
Freddie Almazan - Extern

PARLIAMENTARIAN

Joanne Bundley

NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

Rev. Darryl Thompson Powell, Chair
Rev. Kyle Severson, Staff Liaison
Iris Colon, Near West
Rev. Emily Heitzman, Northeast
Rodger Jones, Central
Jeanne Nelson, North
Loretta Northcutt, South
Rev. David Walters, West
Dcn. David Webb, Northwest



Resources

ASSEMBLY WEBSITE: <https://mcselca.org/who-we-are/synod-assembly/>

Please visit these websites for the most current and up-to-date information regarding the 2021 Synod Assembly.

ASSEMBLY ACCESS

The entire assembly will be streamed online and on the synod's Facebook page. All are welcome to gather and attend.

TO PARTICIPATE ONLINE:

LINK TO FACEBOOK SITE:

Only voting members will have access to the Zoom platform to participate and vote.

ASSEMBLY OFFERING

The 2020 Assembly Offering will be distributed as follows:

MC SYNOD CONSTITUTION

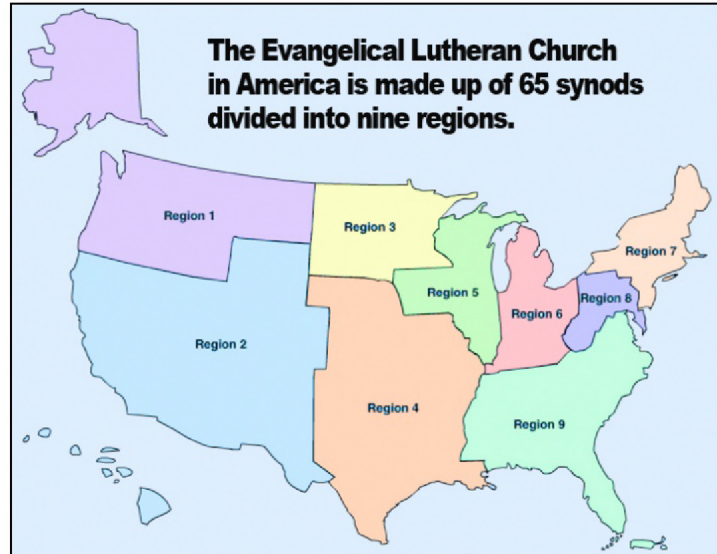
You can access our current constitution at <https://mcselca.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Current-MCS-Constitution-Oct-2019.pdf>



Glossary Of Terms

ELCA TERMS

Call • For Lutherans, “call” or “calling” refers to the vocations of every Christian—the roles in which they live out their baptismal faith, such as family member, citizen, worker, or church member. In the context of public ministry, a call is an official invitation to become a public minister in this church. A pastor or deacon receives a call as he or she begins serving a congregation, institution, or agency of the church.



Conference of Bishops • The 65 bishops of the ELCA meeting for prayer, deliberation, and discernment.

Church Council • The governing board of the ELCA, entrusted with the business of the ELCA between triennial churchwide assemblies.

Churchwide • Term referring to any ministry, process, or emphasis carried out across the entire ELCA. The term is also used to refer to the headquarters of the ELCA in Chicago, Illinois, which is housed in the ELCA Lutheran Center near O’Hare airport.

ELCA • Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (Denominational title), formed by the 1988 merger of the American Lutheran Church (ALC), the Lutheran Church in America (LCA), and the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches (AELC). The three expressions of this church body are the congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization headquartered in Chicago. The ELCA has over 4.2 million members in about 10,000 congregations (2010 figures).

Full Communion • A relationship between Christian denominations in which each fully accepts the validity of the other’s ministry and sacraments.



Full Communion Partners • In the ELCA this term refers to those denominations with which we enjoy full-communication relationships: Episcopal Church USA, United Methodist Church USA, Moravian, Presbyterian Church USA, Reformed, and United Church of Christ.

Portico • Portico, a nonprofit corporation based in Minnesota, provides retirement, health and related benefits and services to enhance the well-being of nearly 50,000 pastors, deacons, lay employees and their families. The vision of Portico is for those they serve to lead healthy lives and achieve financial security.

Presiding Bishop • The pastor elected by the churchwide assembly to lead the ministry of the entire ELCA; currently serving is Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton.

Region 5 • One of 9 regions of the ELCA and includes synods.

Synod • In the ELCA, one of 65 geographical units or expressions of the church. The word synod is Greek for “walking together”, thus each synod is the partnership of the ELCA congregations committed to partnering together to enhance ministry. The synod is not an office or a staff, it's a partnership.

Synod Assembly • The synod assembly is the highest legislative authority of the synod, with a regular meeting held at least tri-annually. All rostered ministers under call, synod council members and lay representatives from each congregation within the synod serve as voting members.

SYNOD TERMS & FACTS

Metro Chicago Synod consists of 173 active congregations in 4 counties: Cook, DuPage, Kane, and Lake. We are 79,543 baptized members as of 2017.

Our Mission: “In Jesus’ Name. Proclaim the Gospel – Make Disciples – Do Justice.”



Bishop • A bishop is an active minister of Word and Sacrament (pastor) in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) who is elected by the Synod Assembly to a six-year term. They are to provide care and oversight for the congregations and rostered ministers of the synod. The bishop is the chief executive officer of the synod. Currently serving the Metropolitan Synod is Bishop Yehiel Curry.

Conference • A geographical grouping of congregations within the synod. There are 8 conferences in the Metropolitan Chicago Synod – Central, North, Northwest, Northeast, Near West, West, South, Southwest. Each conference is led by a dean or co-deans.

Dean • From the Latin decanus, an official in charge of ten monks. In the ELCA a conference dean coordinates the work of congregations within the conference.

Executive Committee • Four officers and 3 at-large members of the Synod Council.

Mission Support • The dollars each congregation shares to support the ministry of the synod and the ELCA churchwide organization.

Synod Office • Our main office is located in Chicago, where the bishop and staff facilitate our ministry together. The address is 1420 W. Dickens Ave. Chicago, IL - 60614.

MCS • The abbreviation for Metropolitan Chicago Synod.

Synod Council • The elected leaders of a synod, including laity and rostered ministers, the vice president, secretary, treasurer, and bishop.

LEADERSHIP TERMS

Candidacy • The process by which those discerning a call to ministry are supported and guided by the synod candidacy committee through the process of Entrance, Endorsement, and Approval as they prepare for ministry vocations as rostered ministers.

Deacon • a Rostered Minister called to the ministry of Word and Service

Interim • A rostered minister who is serving a ministry in transition from one called minister to its next called minister.



Intern • A seminary student who is on staff of a ministry as part of his/her theological education.

Lay Person • A term referring to the people of God. This is typically used to refer to those who are not members of either Ministers of Word and Sacrament (pastor) or Ministers of Word and Service (deacon). The collective community of lay people is sometimes called the laity.

Officers • The officers of the synod are the Bishop, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer.

On Leave From Call (OLFC) • rostered pastors and deacons who are currently without a call to a ministry.

Pastor • a Rostered Minister called to the ministry of Word and Sacrament

Roster, Rostered • The Roster is the official list of all the pastors and deacons in the ELCA. A leader who appears on this list is said to be "rostered."

Synod Authorized Minister (SAM) • a lay person who has been authorized by the synod bishop to serve the congregation in the absence of an available rostered minister.

RELATED EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Seminary • The theological educational institutions that train rostered ministers and ministry professionals in the ELCA. There are 7 Lutheran Seminaries in the US. Each synod is assigned a seminary to support financially.

Lutheran School of Theology Seminary • an ELCA seminary in Chicago, IL which the Metropolitan Chicago Synod is honored to support through mission support dollars.

ASSEMBLY TERMS

Credentials • The process used to authenticate voting members

Plenary • A full session of all voting members in which business is conducted and reports are heard.



Quorum • The minimum number of voting members required to be present for the transaction of business to occur.

Visitor • Any person who attends an assembly to observe, not as a voting member.

Voting Member • At an assembly of this church, an individual elected to listen, discern, and decide on behalf of the whole church. (The term, "delegate" is not used in relation to assemblies.)