



Northern Illinois Synod  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

## Synod Assembly Voting Member Expectations

### **The Term “Voting Member”**

Although some people still refer to Synod Assembly participants as “delegates,” the proper term is “voting member.” Delegates are usually expected to vote in a specific way based on whom they are representing. Voting members are allowed to vote based on their conscience. Although voting members are also sent on behalf of another body (i.e. congregation), voting members do not need to vote the same way their congregation would.

### **Who can vote?**

There are three types of people who attend Synod Assembly: lay voting members, rostered voting members, and visitors.

- *Lay voting members* are either sent by their congregation or by Synod Council. They have voice and vote.
- *Rostered voting members* are pastors or deacons rostered in the ELCA. Whether they are actively serving, retired, or on leave, all rostered ministers are voting members. Pastors and deacons under call are required to attend. They have voice and vote.
- *Visitors* are often special guests or display table hosts. Sometimes, additional congregation members attend as visitors. They do not have voice or vote at assembly, but they are allowed to attend and observe.

### **Lay Congregation Member Voting Allocation**

Most congregations can send up to three voting members: one male adult, one female adult, and one youth or young adult (confirmed to 30 years of age). *Although we strongly encourage voting members to have balanced genders and to be from different households, the synod understands that this is not always possible. It is more important to have all voting positions filled.*

The largest 20% of congregations in Northern Illinois Synod can send additional voting members. To see if your congregation qualifies, please go to: [nisynd.org/assembly](https://nisynd.org/assembly).

### **Voting for Ministers**

Pastors (ministers of Word and Sacrament) under call, deacons (ministers of Word and Service) under call, and interim ministers are required to attend all synod assemblies as voting members. If they are not able to attend, they must formally request to be excused by filling out a form on our synod website.

All other rostered ministers (pastors and deacons) who register for the assembly are also considered voting members, including those who are retired, on leave from call, and those with disability status.

Synod Authorized Ministers are expected to attend as a lay voting member from the congregation they are serving. This is in addition to the two allowed lay voting members, plus a youth or young adult.

## **Expectations for all Voting Members, both Lay and Rostered**

### Prepare for Synod Assembly:

- Register for Synod Assembly or ensure that the congregation is registering you.
  - o Ensure that any dietary or mobility restrictions are shared at registration.
  - o Ensure that your personal email address is used at time of registration. This email is used for notifications and for voting at assembly.
- Secure housing for Friday night of assembly. On campus housing is available, as well as local hotels. Many of the room blocks close at least one month ahead of assembly.
- Review the Bulletin of Reports, especially the items that will be voted on at assembly:
  - o Synod Budget, Elections (bring a list of those you plan to vote for), Resolutions, Compensation Guidelines for Rostered Ministers
- Attend the forums that are held on Zoom ahead of assembly.

### At Assembly

- Check-in and receive your name tag before the first session begins.
- Be on time and in your seat before each plenary session begins.
- Bring a digital device (phone, tablet, or laptop) that is fully charged and has WIFI. This will be used for voting and to access the Bulletin of Reports.
- Stay focused and diligent throughout the plenary sessions.
- Be prepared to speak in favor of or against a motion if appropriate.
- Email any planned motions, especially if it is a detailed amendment, to [assembly@nisynod.org](mailto:assembly@nisynod.org) ahead of making the motion on the floor.

### After Assembly

- Share about your experience in your congregation, either during worship announcements and/or in a newsletter article.
- If any of the elections or resolutions impact your congregation, please share that information.

#### **Expectations for Rostered Ministers under Call**

- Ensure lay voting members know how to access the Bulletin of Reports on Synod Assembly website.
  - o Review the Bulletin of Reports with lay members. Ensure they understand what each report is and why it matters.
  - o Talk through the elections – has each person chosen who to vote for?
  - o Talk through the resolutions – what do they mean? What impact do they have?
- Discuss transportation needs with voting members – will you drive together or separately? Does everyone have a general idea of where they are going?

#### **Expectations for Congregations**

- Pay for Synod Assembly registration for all voting members, both lay and rostered.
- Pay for housing for Friday night of assembly (if not local to the assembly location)
- Print off any resources that voting members may need, especially if they are not tech savvy. This may include:
  - o Budget overview
  - o List of nominees for election
  - o Resolutions
- Collect in-kind and financial offerings to be shared at assembly.
- Pray for those who will be participating in assembly.