

The Synod Assembly is the highest legislative authority of our synod (†S7.01.). To assist us in our work, and to remind us of what it is like to be together as an Assembly, our Synod Council offers the following proposed Rules of Procedure.

Proposed RULES OF PROCEDURE
2023 NORTHWESTERN PENNSYLVANIA SYNOD ASSEMBLY

1. **ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER NEWLY REVISED TWELVETH EDITION:** Shall govern parliamentary procedure of the Synod Assembly (Synod Constitution S7.32.).
2. **SEATING:** All properly accredited and registered voting members of the Assembly (lay, Ministers of Word and Service, and Ministers of Word and Sacrament (active and on leave from call)) will be seated in designated areas at the Assembly (S7.11.06).

All other registered persons (retired Ministers of Word and Service & Ministers of Word and Sacrament who were not elected to represent their congregation and visitors) will be seated in a non-voting section.

3. **QUORUM:** One-half of the Synod Assembly's registered voting members shall constitute a quorum (S7.14.).
4. **AGENDA:** The proposed Agenda may be amended by the Assembly prior to adoption. Except for items introduced by the Committee on Reference and Counsel, or items previously tabled, items of business which are not on the agenda may be introduced at the end of the Assembly by a two-thirds majority vote of the assembly. (S7.11.10.)

With the consent of the assembly, the chair shall have the authority to call items of business before the assembly in whatever order the chair considers most expedient for the conduct of the assembly's business. (S7.11.14.). The chair shall have the option of deciding when to call for Synod Council recommendations. The chair may interrupt procedures at any time to receive reports of voting or to call for balloting (S7.11.15.).

Amendments to the proposed budget for the coming year may be made at the time of the presentation of recommendation from the Synod Council. Any shift in funds must be accompanied by a compensatory shift of another project in order to keep within the recommended parameters (S7.11.16.). Proposed changes to the budget for the next year must be submitted to the Committee on Finance and Property within two hours of the formal presentation of the budget to the Synod Assembly (S7.11.34.A91.).

5. **NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS:** In all elections by the Synod Assembly, other than for bishop, a majority of the votes cast shall be necessary for election (†S9.02.). A person making a nomination from the floor must be certain the nominee will accept the position if elected and be prepared to provide biographical information. All elections shall be by written ballot or electronic voting. The wearing of promotional buttons or slogans, the distribution of material of the carrying of placards to promote one nominee over another is not permitted at any time.

6. **RESOLUTIONS:** The Reference and Counsel Committee has the authority to decide the merit of any resolution/memorial submitted and to determine the appropriate forum for its presentation to the Assembly (S7.11.13.) A two-thirds vote of the assembly shall be required to add the item of new business to the agenda.

Only the resolved sections of resolutions/memorials placed before the Assembly for action shall be read aloud.

At the end of the Assembly, any unfinished items of business will be referred to the Synod Council for review and consideration.

7. **SPEAKING DURING FLOOR DISCUSSION:** Each voting member, or those persons accorded the privilege of seat and/or voice, when recognized by the Chair, shall state their name, congregation or the institution or group they represent. Persons speaking from the floor shall use the floor microphones and shall address and speak to the Chair. Speeches by an individual shall be limited to **five minutes** on each assembly issue. Speakers may speak a second time on the same issue, but only after all others desiring to speak have been given opportunity to do so. Those speaking a second time shall be limited to **two minutes**. (S7.11.08.). During debate, speeches will alternate between for and against the motion. Amendments to a main motion will be treated in the same manner. Debates may be extended by a majority vote of the Assembly. In a debate or when discussing a resolution during the Assembly, members of the Assembly shall refrain from applause.
8. **DISTRIBUTION OF MATERIALS:** Materials brought to the Assembly for distribution need the approval of the Reference and Counsel Committee.
9. **VOTING MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES:** Voting members and alternates must be pre-registered; no persons shall be registered as voting members or alternates upon arrival at the Assembly. If for some reason a chosen voting member is unable to serve, an alternate voting member can, upon proper clearance by the Registrar, become a voting member at any time during the Assembly. Alternate voting members must be certified in written form by their congregation's president or pastor and approved by the Assembly Registrar. Voting members, advising members, and official visitors shall be required to carry the designated identification issued to them upon registration while attending business session, and/or other official meetings directly pertaining to the Synod Assembly. Replacement I.D.s may be obtained from the Registrar.

Proxy and absentee voting shall not be permitted in the transaction of any business of the synod (†S7.31.). Duly elected voting members of the Synod Council who are not otherwise voting members of the Synod Assembly shall be granted the privilege of both voice and vote as members of the Synod Assembly (S7.28.).

10. **VARIOUS METHODS OF VOTING.** As directed by the chair, voting may be by voice,

by show of hands, by standing, by written ballot, or through electronic means. When a division of the house is ordered, the vote shall be by raising of cards, by standing vote, or by written ballot as directed by the chair. Abstentions are not recognized and do not count as a vote cast.

To be eligible to vote, a voting member must be seated in the assembly. Voting will be by written ballot, electronic voting, voice, or by show of voting cards as follows:

Affirmative vote	GREEN card
Negative vote	RED card
Abstain	YELLOW card
Question	WHITE card

11. MOTIONS AND RESOLUTIONS

Substantive motions or resolutions, or amendments to either, shall be in written form and distributed as follows: one copy to the Chair, one copy to the Secretary, and one copy retained by the presenter.

A resolution, which is germane to the matter before the Assembly, may be offered by any voting member during the consideration of the matter by the Assembly. The Chair may:

- A. Allow consideration of the resolution at that time;
- B. Defer consideration of the resolution to a later time during the Assembly; or
- C. Refer the resolution to the Committee on Reference and Counsel (or the matter being considered by the Assembly) which may:
 - Advise approval;
 - Advise disapproval;
 - Advise further consideration of the resolution by the Committee subsequent to the Assembly;
 - Recommend a substitute resolution to the Assembly;
 - Advise the assembly that the item should be tabled;
 - Advise the assembly that the item can be committed to a committee; and /or
 - Advise the assembly to postpone the item to a time certain.

Any resolution not germane to any matter before the Assembly or on the Assembly agenda shall be submitted by a voting member to the Synod Secretary in writing no later than one hour prior to the opening of the Assembly. Each resolution shall be supported in writing by at least one other voting member. The Synod Secretary shall refer such resolutions to the Committee on Reference and Counsel.

Any resolution not germane to any matter before the Assembly or on the Assembly agenda which because of circumstances which develop during the Assembly cannot be submitted before the Assembly shall be submitted to the Synod Secretary in writing and supported in writing by at least one other voting member. Such resolutions shall be referred to the Committee on Reference and Counsel.

By-laws, not in conflict with the synod constitution, may be adopted or amended at any regular meeting of the Synod Assembly by resolution presented in writing by the Synod Council or by at

least fifteen (15) voting members. The Synod Secretary shall immediately refer any amendment submitted by the voting member to the Committee on Reference and Counsel.

Whenever a resolution is submitted to the Committee on Reference and Counsel, the committee, on behalf of the Assembly, may:

- A. Assist the author in drafting appropriate language for the resolution;
- B. Advise approval for consideration by the Assembly;
- C. Advise disapproval for consideration by the Assembly;
- D. Advise referral to a synod committee or to any appropriate review group for consideration; or
- E. Recommend a substitute motion to the Assembly.

Assembly business not acted upon at the time of the adjournment of the Assembly shall be referred to the Synod Council for action.