

SYNOD NEWS

Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA

Assembly 2020 Will Be Held Online

Friday evening, October 16 & Sunday afternoon, October 18

Friday evening, October 23 & Saturday morning and afternoon, October 24

At its meeting on July 14 the Synod Council voted 19-1 to hold Assembly 2020 online. This decision was not made quickly or lightly. Two resolutions were presented: (1) hold Assembly 2020 online or (2) cancel Assembly 2020 and hold the bishop election at Assembly 2021. Members of the Assembly Planning Team shared information about the feasibility of an online assembly, including the technology that would be needed, the process for voting, the agenda, and other details of how it would take place. After two hours of serious debate, the resolution to hold Assembly 2020 online was brought to the floor, voted on, and adopted.

Because the election of a bishop is by ecclesiastical ballot, and because lengthy online sessions are extremely fatiguing, the Assembly will be conducted on two successive weekends. The first ballot, on which the name of any pastor rostered in the ELCA can be entered, will happen on Friday evening, Oct. 16. Time will be required to vet all the names and to determine which individuals request that their name be removed. For that reason, the second session will be held on Sunday afternoon, Oct. 18, at which time there will be a second ballot.

The top seven candidates will be notified, vetted, and invited to come to The Lutheran Center the following Friday evening, Oct. 23, to answer questions prepared by the Election Team based on input from surveying the synod. Then on Saturday morning, Oct. 24, a third ballot will be conducted. Saturday afternoon the three finalists will be introduced and offered an opportunity to address the Assembly. Following that will be a fourth ballot, and later a fifth ballot. (Note: a tie on the fourth or fifth ballot could result in a sixth ballot.)

Other business of the synod will be conducted throughout the sessions, including a presentation from our Churchwide representative (still to be determined), adoption of the spending plan and compensation guidelines, other elections, debate on various resolutions brought to the Assembly, and other traditional and/or required reports and presentations. There will be an online worship service prior the beginning of the first session on Friday, Oct. 16; and the offering for World Hunger will be received through a "Donate" button on the synod website.

The Assembly Planning Team is acutely aware of the challenges involved in holding an online assembly. Every effort is being made to insure that Assembly 2020 feels as "normal" as possible and that the experience is secure, yet user friendly and readily accessible. Once registration is complete, voting members will be contacted with the instructions they need in order to participate.

Please check the synod website at <http://nepasynod.org/assembly-2020/> for more information as it becomes available. Registration will open mid-August, and a strict deadline for submitting registrations (probably very early October) will need to be observed because of technological requirements.

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