



**35<sup>th</sup> Annual Synod Assembly**  
**Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA**  
**June 10-11, 2022**

**Resolution Submittal Form**

Please use this form to submit resolutions to be considered by the 2022 Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod Assembly. **The Committee of Reference and Counsel will review resolutions submitted to it before the assembly and requests that resolutions be submitted as soon as possible, so that voting members can consider them before the assembly.** Please note: a resolution adopted by

the 2005 Synod Assembly requires that resolutions submitted less than 2 weeks before the assembly (by Thursday, May 26, 2022) will be considered only if the assembly votes to receive them.

**Please read the guidelines on the reverse side of this page.** Return the form to the synod office (address information below)

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*Please type or write legibly. You may submit only one resolution on each form. Copy form for additional resolutions.*

*Sign the form where indicated; include the name and location of your congregation. If you are a lay member of a congregation, include the signature of the pastor or president of the congregation (this signature is requested to certify that you are a participating member of an ELCA congregation in the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod).*

A resolution concerning Participation of the Whole Body of Christ

WHEREAS, The Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod's main predecessor from 1748 to 1962, the Evangelical Lutheran Ministerium of Pennsylvania and the Adjacent States, relied on volunteers for most of its history to carry out synodical ministries, not having its "first salaried president"<sup>1</sup> until 1917, by which time the Ministerium had 579 congregations; and

WHEREAS, Large synod staffs of paid, full-time professionals came into being only in the decades following World War II, a time of unique and dramatic increase in financial support for religious organizations, so that President Wilson E. Touhsaent could write in his annual report in 1971, "We are proud that the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod has been a pioneer in the regional use of staff" (that is, assigning staff members to serve the "congregations and pastors" of "specific districts"), which was a new development made possible by the synod's having seven full-time professional staff members of its own plus three additional full-time staff members assigned to the synod by churchwide units of the Lutheran Church in America;<sup>2</sup> and

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<sup>1</sup> John A. W. Haas, President, "Report of the President," *Minutes of the Proceedings of the 169<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Ministerium of Pennsylvania and Adjacent States* (1916): page 20. In referring to the forthcoming selection of the Ministerium's first salaried president, President Haas is looking ahead to 1917 and adds about this new officer, "with whose advent a new era ought to be begun in the life of our Ministerium!"

<sup>2</sup> Wilson E. Touhsaent, President, "Report of the President," *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Fourth Annual Convention and Special 1970 Convention of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Lutheran Church in America* (1971): page 20. Having "the regional use of staff" was so new a concept that President Touhsaent notes that "at least three other synods have begun a similar approach in the past year."

WHEREAS, This synod's regular purchasing power has diminished greatly since the late 1960s and early 1970s to the point that today the synod's purchasing power is only 16.8% of what it was in 1971,<sup>3</sup> a decline that has made our continuing to have a large, paid staff impossible; and

WHEREAS, Even when the synod had a larger staff, numerous persons both lay and ordained served as volunteers and continued to add strength and leadership to the synod's various ministries; and

WHEREAS, Because the ordained leaders and congregations of this synod can no longer expect a paid synod staff to carry out all of the tasks and activities once performed by the staff and need to consider the voluntary involvement of ordained leaders and lay members alike to be increasingly essential in the carrying out of synodical ministries; therefore be it

RESOLVED, That all congregations of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod served by Ministers of Word and Sacrament and/or Ministers of Word and Service should not only allow, but also encourage and expect that those leaders will be involved in significant ways in the ministries of their local mission districts and/or the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod and/or the churchwide expression of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America so that the life of the synod truly is a participatory reality of Gaining Strength and not seen as a spectator sport.

Rev. Carl D. Shankweiler- Zion, Frackville and Trinity Chapel, Buck Run

Date of submission: Thursday May 26, 2022.

**Return to:** *Committee of Reference and Counsel, 2022 Synod Assembly, Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, 2354 Grove Rd., Allentown PA 18109-3044, email [info@nepssynod.org](mailto:info@nepssynod.org).*

### **Recommendation of the Committee of Reference and Counsel:**

The Committee of Reference and Counsel recommends that the proposed resolution "Concerning Participation of the Whole Body of Christ" be commended to this assembly, citing the charges extended to all rostered ministers of the ELCA in their Letter of Call, the ELCA's Model Constitution for Congregations (2019) [\*C9.03. and \*C9.23.], the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod Constitution (Bylaw 12.01.d.), and the baptismal vows of the entire body of Christ.

#### **From Letter of Call to Ordained Ministers of the ELCA:**

"We call you to exercise among us the ministry of Word and [Sacrament/Service] which God has established and which the Holy Spirit empowers...to impart knowledge of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and its wider ministry; to endeavor to increase support given by our congregation to the work of our whole church; to equip us for service; and guide us in proclaiming God's love through word and deed."

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<sup>3</sup> The 1971 Mission Support equivalent was \$1,658,008, which adjusted for inflation would be \$11,093,097 in 2021 dollars. In 2021 our Mission Support was actually \$1,860,637, which is 16.8% of that 1971 adjusted amount.

From the ELCA Model Constitution for Congregations (2019)

- Chapter\* C9.03. Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,
- a. Every minister of Word and Sacrament shall:
    - 1) preach the Word;
    - 2) administer the sacraments;
    - 3) conduct public worship;
    - 4) provide pastoral care;
    - 5) seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel;
    - 6) impart knowledge of this church and its wider ministry through available channels of effective communication;
    - 7) witness to the Kingdom of God in the community, in the nation, and abroad;and
    - 8) speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, calling for justice and proclaiming God's love for the world.
  - b. Each pastor with a congregational call shall, within the congregation:
    - 1) offer instruction, confirm, marry, visit the sick and distressed, and bury the dead;
    - 2) relate to all schools and organizations of this congregation;
    - 3) install regularly elected members of the Congregation Council;
    - 4) with the council, administer discipline;
    - 5) endeavor to increase the support given by the congregation to the work of the churchwide organization and of the (insert name of synod) ; and
    - 6) encourage adherence to covenantal relationship with this church as expressed in the Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. ]

From the ELCA Model Constitution for Congregations (2019)

- Chapter\* C9.23. Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, every minister of Word and Service shall:
- a. Be rooted in the Word of God, for proclamation and service;
  - b. Advocate a prophetic diakonia that commits itself to risk-taking and innovative service on the frontiers of the Church's outreach, giving particular attention to the suffering places in God's world;
  - c. Speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, calling for justice and proclaiming God's love for the world, witnessing to the realm of God in the community, the nation, and abroad;
  - d. Equip the baptized for ministry in God's world that affirms the gifts of all people;
  - e. Encourage mutual relationships that invite participation and accompaniment of others in God's mission;
  - f. Practice stewardship that respects God's gift of time, talents, and resources;
  - g. Be grounded in a gathered community for ongoing diaconal formation;
  - h. Share knowledge of this church and its wider ministry of the gospel and advocate for the work of all expressions of this church; and
  - i. Identify and encourage qualified persons to prepare for ministry of the gospel. ]

From the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod Constitution, Bylaw 12.01.d.

BLS12.01.d. Each Mission District shall have an Assembly, which shall meet at least annually.

- 1) The Mission District Assembly shall consist of all rostered ministers under call to congregations and the same number and category of lay representatives as each congregation has to the Synod Assembly. The executive of each Church-affiliated institution or agency on the District territory shall designate two representatives to the Mission District Assembly, one of whom shall be a layperson. The status of "official visitor" shall be given to rostered ministers living on the territory of the Mission District, who are either retired or are engaged in extra-parish service. The Mission District Assembly shall also consist of those persons of a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by a Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America who serve a congregation on the Mission District territory.
- 2) The Mission District Assembly shall elect a dean from among the rostered ministers of Word and Sacrament of the Mission District, a secretary, and such other persons as may be assigned by this synod's constitution and bylaws. They shall serve terms of three years, and shall serve no more than two terms consecutively.

From "Holy Baptism," *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, (p. 231).

"We welcome you into the body of Christ and into the *mission we share*: join us in giving thanks and praise to God and bearing God's creative and redeeming word to all the world."  
[emphasis added].