

Guidelines for Resolutions

for the Southwestern Minnesota Synod Assembly

Resolutions which are being submitted to the Southwestern Minnesota Synod Assembly should adhere to the following guidelines:

1. DETERMINE APPROPRIATE DIRECTION

Make an attempt to determine if the issue or idea you are concerned about is most appropriately handled by:

- a) a Synod Committee
- b) the Synod Council
- c) the Synod Staff
- d) the Executive Committee
- e) Synod Assembly

Direct the business to the appropriate unit. If the Synod Assembly is the most appropriate, follow steps 2 - 7.

2. VALIDATE YOUR IDEA WITH OTHER PEOPLE

It is advisable to channel your idea through other individuals or groups to get their response on how convincing your idea actually is. If you have a difficult time convincing the following groups that your idea is valid, you may find it even harder to convince the Synod Assembly. Send your idea (resolution) through some of the following channels before sending it to the Synod Assembly:

- a) Individuals
- b) Congregation(s)
- c) Conference(s)
- d) Synod Board(s) or Committee(s)
- e) Synod Council
- f) Executive Committee

3. USE FEW WORDS

Please follow the guidelines for writing an effective resolution so it can be easily read and understood by the Resolutions Committee and by the Synod Assembly. This helps to eliminate valuable committee time and Assembly time which might be unduly spent clarifying and rewording the resolution. Use as few words as possible to clearly state your position.

4. WRITING A RESOLUTION

The resolution itself should be concise and to the point. An effective resolution is designed to do two things: a) to state a concern or problem and b) to propose a method of resolving that concern or problem. The concern or problem is stated in the "WHEREAS" clause. Sometimes the concern can be adequately stated in one such clause; other times it takes several "WHEREAS" clauses to state clearly the concern or problem.

The proposed solution to the concern should be stated in the "BE IT RESOLVED" clause. Sometimes the solution can be adequately stated in one such clause; other times it takes several clauses to state clearly the steps involved in the solution. The solution should include:

- a) who should act,
- b) what should be done,
- c) when it should be accomplished, and
- d) to whom the results should be reported.

5. FACT SHEET

A background statement, not to exceed one page, and outlining both pro and con arguments relative to the resolution should be provided by every individual or group that presents a resolution for Assembly action. This background statement should be separate from the resolution itself.

6. SAMPLE RESOLUTION

WHEREAS there is a lot of business which needs to be handled at the Synod Assembly; and WHEREAS much time can be spent clarifying issues that are poorly stated or use excessive words; and WHEREAS each resolution author wants his or her resolution to be carefully considered; THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Synod Resolutions Committee be authorized to enforce the resolutions guidelines which were approved by the 1987 Constituting Convention.

7. START WORKING ON THE RESOLUTIONS NOW

Run your ideas through congregational meetings, conference councils, conference assemblies, or synod boards so you have a priority resolution that has a good chance of being heard on the floor of the Assembly.

8. WHEN TO SUBMIT RESOLUTIONS – (the deadline is March 3, 2010)

A regular complaint at Synod Assemblies is either that voting members did not get copies of the resolutions far enough in advance to study them adequately or that the Resolutions Committee has not sufficiently edited and revised resolutions to provide clarity.

Only Assembly resolutions received by the Synod Assembly Resolutions Committee and at the synod office at least 45 days prior to the 2010 Synod Assembly (March 10, 2010) will be considered at that Assembly. Resolutions coming from Conference Assemblies must be at the synod office and in the hands of the Synod Assembly Resolutions Committee chairperson no later than four (4) days following the Conference Assembly and at least 45 days prior to the Synod Assembly.

The Synod Assembly Resolutions Committee has the authority to determine whether or not a given resolution qualifies for Assembly consideration according to the provisions outlined above. And a two-thirds (2/3) majority Assembly vote is required to override the decision of the Assembly Resolutions Committee.

The following exceptions may be made:

- a. Resolutions that are the direct result of the Assembly's response to items that are listed on the Assembly agenda.
- b. Resolutions that address issues of such an immediate and urgent nature that they clearly cannot be postponed until the next Assembly.

9. AUTHORSHIP OF RESOLUTIONS

Any member of, or group within, a congregation of the Southwestern Minnesota Synod may author a resolution to the Synod Assembly Resolutions Committee. Resolutions submitted to the Synod Assembly Resolutions Committee should include the name and address of the author and an indication of the congregation, conferences, and/or other groups that have endorsed the resolution. The name and address of the author is needed so that the Synod Assembly Resolutions Committee has a contact person in the event editing of the resolution is necessary.

10. ASSISTANCE IN RESOLUTION WRITING

The Synod Assembly Resolutions Committee stands ready to assist persons at the Synod Assembly in composing or revising resolutions to the end that they will be clear and concise and thereby receive a fair hearing at the Assembly.

11. CHURCHWIDE REQUESTS

1. Resolutions and memorials may not be combined in one action.
2. A resolution must be directed to a specific Churchwide unit and expressing a specific concern related to a Churchwide ministry, program, or unit. Learn about the focus of the various units at www.elca.org in the current ELCA yearbook.
3. A *resolution* is a more direct route for action than a *memorial*. A memorial is a recommendation by the Southwestern Minnesota Synod in Assembly to the ELCA in Assembly that it take a specific action.
4. A *memorial* is best used for issues of broad policy that are properly brought before the Churchwide Assembly. The ELCA Memorials Committee of the ELCA Assembly will provide a recommendation for action to the ELCA Assembly.