

Resolutions and Memorials Guidelines and Information

2016 Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod Assembly

This assembly provides an opportunity for Voting Members and various units of the synod to present Resolutions or Memorials for consideration. Resolutions adopted by the synod assembly will be acted upon locally or passed to the appropriate units of the ELCA for action. Memorials approved for consideration by the 2016 ELCA Churchwide Assembly in New Orleans will be forwarded to the Churchwide Assembly Memorials Committee for inclusion in the advance materials for that assembly, along with memorials from other synods throughout the ELCA. However, most of the materials sent at this late date may not be included in the items considered by the Churchwide Assembly. In such cases, the memorials may be addressed by the ELCA Church Council or await action by the 2019 Churchwide Assembly.

A few points of clarification with regard to Memorials and Resolutions:

Memorials are requests for action by the Churchwide assembly that have been adopted by a synod assembly. Memorials deal with broad policy issues and make recommendations for action to be brought for consideration, along with related memorials from other synods, to the triennial ELCA Churchwide Assembly, as determined by the Churchwide Assembly Memorials Committee.

Resolutions are requests for action from synod assemblies or synod councils to the ELCA Church Council or units or offices of the ELCA Churchwide organization. Resolutions adopted by the synod assembly may also direct prescribed action be taken by synodical-level entities, such as the bishop, synod council, or units and offices of the synod. Resolutions are more narrow in focus than a memorial. *A synod assembly cannot direct that action be taken by the ELCA Churchwide organization.* However, the assembly may direct the synod council to request that action be taken by the ELCA Church Council or by the churchwide organization.

A resolution and a memorial are *not* to be combined in one motion. Additionally, a synod should not simultaneously address both the Church Council and the Churchwide Assembly on the same subject.

Neither Resolutions nor Memorials may request or direct action be taken that violates the Constitution and Bylaws of the ELCA or of the synod. However, synods may use memorials or resolutions to propose changes to these governing documents.

Formatting Resolutions and Memorials. For all submissions, keep in mind the following:

- The title of the Resolution or Memorial should be short and to the point, but provide enough information to be clear and accurate.
- The sponsors of the Resolution/Memorial must be voting members of the assembly or a unit or office of the synod – and include contact information for the person authorized to speak on behalf of the sponsors.
- The Synod Secretary will assign a sequential number to the resolution upon receipt.
- “Whereas” clauses should concisely describe the issue, concern, problem and basis for or need of the resolution. They state the case and provide justification, but technically are not part of the resolution. They should be accurate and factual and should not misrepresent the issue

being addressed or offer a false foundation for the proposed action. They should not be argumentative.

- “Resolved” clauses point to proposed solutions and define requested action. These clauses should clearly layout:
 - to whom is the request for action addressed,
 - what specifically is to be done,
 - when should the action be undertaken and
 - to whom should a report of its completion or progress be given.
 - If there are any financial or budgetary implications, then direction as to the source of funding or other means of support to be used should be included.

Interdependence, as well as stewardship of resources, requires care to avoid resolutions and memorials that impose unreasonable financial demands on synods and the churchwide organization.

Under Robert’s Rules of Order, the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod’s Reference and Counsel Committee is empowered to screen all resolutions and memorials. Their primary role is to see that each resolution is written so that it receives a fair hearing at the assembly. At a minimum, this means ensuring clarity in wording and accuracy in information. A good test is, “Is this statement clear? Will the resolution make sense to someone who was not present at the assembly?” The committee may also make editorial suggestions for the sake of conformity to the above requirements. In all cases, if issues exist with respect to the clarity or accuracy of resolutions and memorials, the Reference and Counsel Committee will attempt to confer with the sponsors to address these issues.

All Drafts of Resolutions and Memorials MUST be received by April 15, 2016.

- Clean and factual submissions should be emailed to Mr. Kevin Anderson (Secretary of the Synod) kevin.d.anderson@comcast.net and the Rev. Mark Edwards (Chair of Reference and Counsel Committee) medwards@elcvienna.org.
- The Reference and Counsel Committee will review the submission and suggest revision or editorial changes to the resolution or memorial and forward those to the point of contact.
- It is the responsibility of the sponsor(s) to make/approve changes and verify questions of fact within a timely manner in order that final drafts may be made available to the Synod Assembly in a timely manner.
- It is the responsibility of the sponsor(s) to follow-up as appropriate on action steps if Resolution/Memorial is adopted.

Please contact me if you have any questions regarding resolutions or memorials.

Rev. Mark Edwards
Chair, Reference and Counsel Committee

attached: sample resolution

****SAMPLE RESOLUTION/MEMORIAL****

Reference & Counsel Number: 2016- ____ (assigned)

Secretary's Number: _____ (assigned)

Title: Congregational Playgrounds

Submitted by: Rev. Mary Margaret Ryan

Received: ____ (date received by the Secretary of the synod)

RESOLUTION

Whereas there are many congregations which have among their members families with young children; and

Whereas the physical health of our young children is a primary concern of all who care for the "little ones;" and

Whereas the church has a practice of being a safe place for children to grow and to have fun; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod Assembly direct the synod council to investigate reliable sources of playground equipment for congregations of the synod; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod Assembly encourage its congregations to plan, purchase and supervise the use of playground equipment for its children.

MEMORIAL

Whereas there is an epidemic of obesity among children in America, including in the ones we care for in our congregations; and

Whereas the future of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) lies in a healthy, wholesome generation becoming leaders in our congregations; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod Assembly memorialize the 2016 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to direct the Office of the Presiding Bishop to develop a policy seeking to promote playgrounds as a signature ministry of the ELCA.