



Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

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Transition Task Force – Glossary of Terms and Maps

ELCA Terms

Conference of Bishops – The 65 bishops of the ELCA meeting for prayer, deliberation, and discernment.

Church Council – The governing board of the ELCA, entrusted with the business of the ELCA between triennial churchwide assemblies.

Churchwide – Term referring to any ministry, process, or emphasis carried out across the entire ELCA. The term is also used to refer to the headquarters of the ELCA in Chicago.

ELCA – Our denominational title is the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, formed by the 1988 merger of the American Lutheran Church (ALC), the Lutheran Church in America (LCA), and the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches (AELC). The three expressions of the ELCA are the congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization in Chicago. The ELCA has 3.5 million members in over 9,000 congregations (12/31/16 figures).

Presiding Bishop – The pastor elected by the churchwide assembly to lead the ministry of the entire ELCA; currently serving is Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton.

Synod Terms

Assistant to the Bishop – Assists the bishop in carrying out responsibilities.

Director for Evangelical Mission (DEM) – Assists the bishop in the area of evangelism and congregational mission. In our synod, this individual also holds the position of Assistant to the Bishop.

Bishop – The pastor elected by the Synod Assembly to lead a synod of the ELCA. Bishops are elected to 6-year terms.

Conference – A geographical grouping of congregations within the synod. The Metro Washington D.C. Synod has 6 conferences: D.C., Maryland, Montgomery, Potomac, Fairfax, and Virginia Conferences.

Synod – In the ELCA, one of 65 geographical units or expressions of the church. The 65 synods are grouped into 9 geographical regions.

Synod Council – The elected leaders of a synod, including laity and clergy. Officers are the Bishop, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer.

Leadership Terms

Candidacy – The process by which those discerning a call to ministry are supported and guided as they prepare for ministry vocations as rostered leaders.

Deacon – a rostered individual, theologically trained and called to a ministry of Word and Service. A deacon connects the church with the needs of the world, and may serve in congregations, social ministry organizations, or other types of ministry.

Dean – Pastor chosen to lead a conference within a synod.

Mobility – The process of matching the gifts of rostered leaders with a new ministry opportunity.

Pastor – A rostered individual, theologically trained and called to a ministry of Word and Sacrament.

Roster – The official list of all pastors and deacons in the ELCA. A leader who appears on this list is said to be “rostered.”

Assembly Terms

Ecclesiastical Ballot – the process by which a bishop is elected in the ELCA. On the first ballot the name of any eligible individual on the ELCA clergy roster may be submitted by voting members. The first ballot is the nominating ballot if no election occurs on the first ballot. Spoken floor nominations are precluded in the ecclesiastical ballot process.

Memorial – A document which is considered by the voting members of a synod assembly, asking the churchwide assembly to take a position or initiate an action related to a special issue. Memorials are adopted, or they fail.

Plenary – A full session of all voting members in which business is conducted and reports are heard.

Reference & Counsel – This committee reviews all resolutions and memorials prior to their consideration at an assembly.

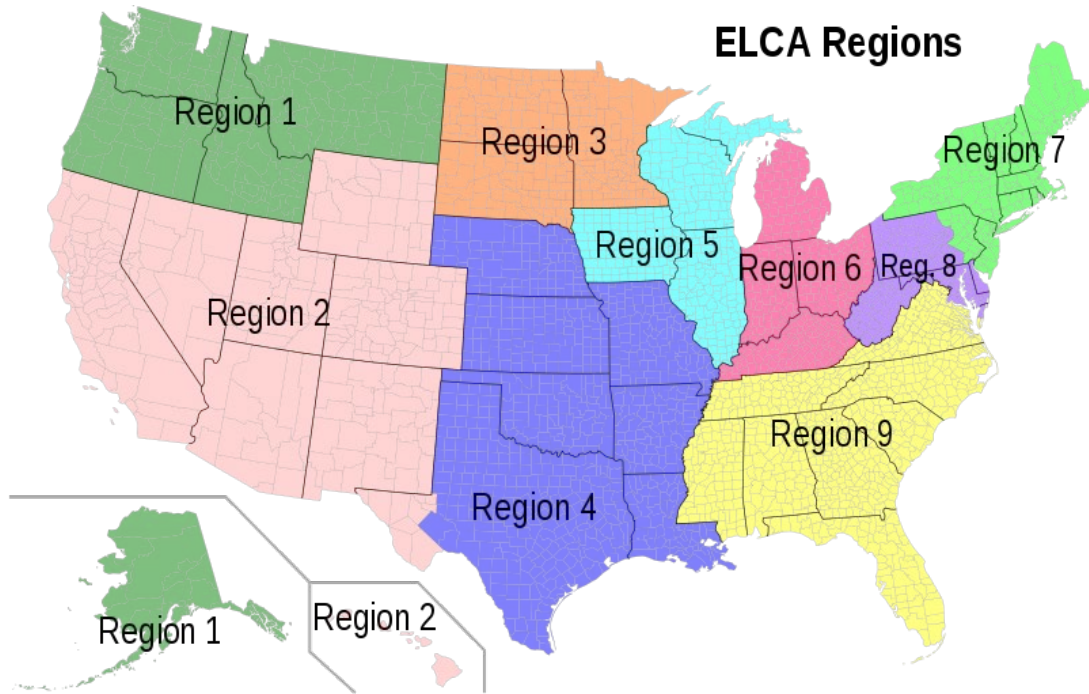
Resolution – Requests for actions, priorities, or positions are brought before the assembly in the form of a resolution. Resolutions are adopted, or they fail.

Visitor – Any person who attends an assembly to observe, not as a voting member.

Voting Member – At an assembly of this church, an individual elected to listen, discern, and decide on behalf of the whole church. The term “delegate” is not used in relation to assemblies.

Adapted and updated from *Landscapes of Faith*, Voting Member Handbook of the Rocky Mountain Synod, April 26-28, 2012.

ELCA Map



Synods in Region 8, ELCA Map



Metro D.C. Synod Map

https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?mid=12c3NqjW8XJLpP_YDJ6DEAAEzAzI&usp=sharing