

## Memorial 2022-1

### Recommendation for a Structured Process for the Pre-Assembly Identification of Nominees for the Election of a Presiding Bishop

1 **Whereas**, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) elects a Presiding Bishop to serve a  
2 six-year term; and

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4 **Whereas**, the responsibilities of the Presiding Bishop are extensive, as outlined in the  
5 *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions* of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
6 in 13.21.; and

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8 **Whereas**, these responsibilities are of singular importance in guiding the work of the ELCA as a  
9 vital and growing communion of faith with impact on the lives of many in this country and  
10 around the globe; and

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12 **Whereas**, the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions* require the first ballot in the  
13 election of the Presiding Bishop to be an ecclesiastical ballot<sup>1</sup>, but allow for a pre-assembly  
14 identification process for the election of officers including the Vice President and Secretary  
15 (19.01.A21.); and

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17 **Whereas**, the next election of a Presiding Bishop is scheduled for the 2025 Churchwide  
18 Assembly; and

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20 **Whereas**, many synods, including the Saint Paul Area Synod, have developed pre-assembly  
21 identification processes for nominees to the Office of Synod Bishop that allows persons to agree  
22 to stand for election, to complete a background check and other screening prior to the synod  
23 assembly, and to share an overview of gifts, experiences, and vision with voting members prior  
24 to the synod assembly at which the election will occur; and

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26 **Whereas**, the Saint Paul Area Synod has found that a pre-assembly identification process  
27 provides meaningful additional time for candidates and voting members to prayerfully discern  
28 the needs of the synod and how each candidates' gifts, experiences, and vision would advance  
29 the ministry of the synod, all of which helps voting members cast a better informed first ballot;  
30 therefore be it

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32 **Resolved**, that the Saint Paul Area Synod in assembly memorialize the 2022 Churchwide  
33 Assembly of the ELCA to direct the ELCA Church Council (Church Council) to establish a  
34 structured process for the pre-assembly identification of nominees for the Office of Presiding  
35 Bishop in a way that allows identified candidates to complete a background check and

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<sup>1</sup> The ecclesiastical ballot is noted as a procedural requirement in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Constitution in 19.01.C19 without reference to the prayerful and spiritual discernment suggested by the term *ecclesiastical ballot*.

36 appropriate screening, and become publicly known prior to the Churchwide Assembly; and be it  
37 further

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39 **Resolved**, that the Church Council be directed to create an advisory committee of both lay and  
40 rostered minister members to design such a pre-assembly identification process that includes  
41 several members of the Church Council, several bishops, and representatives of Full Communion  
42 Partners that elect their Presiding Bishop or Presiding Officer through a different process of pre-  
43 identification, reporting the structure of that pre-assembly identification process to all synods by  
44 November 2023.

Submitted by the Saint Paul Area Synod Council

*Because this memorial is consistent with the governing documents of the ELCA and addresses an issue of general concern to the Saint Paul Area Synod, the Reference and Counsel Committee recommends adoption of this memorial.*