

A Quick & Easy Guide to Writing Resolutions for the Synod Assembly

Western Iowa Synod ELCA

Anyone who is a voting member of the Western Iowa Synod Assembly is permitted to submit items of business for the assembly to consider. Normally these come to the assembly in the form of resolutions and memorials.

A resolution calls for specific actions to be taken. Sometimes resolutions establish policy for the synod itself, e.g. the resolution to adopt compensation guidelines for rostered leaders. At other times they call for action from congregations, the synod council, a Churchwide unit, or the ELCA Church Council.

When a resolution requests action from the ELCA Churchwide Assembly, it needs to be written as a memorial to the Churchwide Assembly (see format guidelines below). Memorials should be reserved for broader policy issues that belong in the Churchwide Assembly. Most concerns will receive attention more quickly when they are addressed as a resolution to the Church Council or a specific Churchwide unit rather than as a memorial to the Churchwide Assembly.

Here are guidelines for writing resolutions and memorials.

1. A resolution should be stated clearly and concisely.

2. Before submitting a resolution, you should test what you have written. Ask yourself:

- Is the information in the resolution complete and accurate?
- Is this a matter that pertains to the life and ministry of the synod?
- Is this a matter of significance requiring consideration by the synod assembly?
- Is the action requested one that the synod can appropriately and effectively implement?
- Is this concern directed toward the appropriate unit? Is it better addressed to the synod council, the executive committee, a synod board or committee or the synod staff?
- Do other people validate the idea? Have you tested it with pastors or other voting members?
- Does the resolution answer: WHAT should be done? WHO should act? WHAT is the anticipated cost, if any, and what entity should bear the cost? TO WHOM should the results be reported?
- If the resolution calls for changes to the constitution or bylaws, are the proposed changes included in the resolution?
- Does the resolution use specific, non-inflammatory language, including straightforward nouns and verbs?

3. Format

- If a resolution requires one action, use the following format:
 - RESOLVED, that _____
- If a resolution requires more than one action, the following format is used:
 - RESOLVED, that _____; and be it further
 - RESOLVED, that _____
- If a resolution is preceded by one reason for submitting the resolution, the following format is used:
 - WHEREAS, _____; and
 - RESOLVED, that _____
- If a resolution is preceded by two or more reasons, the following format is used:
 - WHEREAS, _____; and
 - WHEREAS, _____; therefore be it
 - RESOLVED, that _____
- On those for referral to a Churchwide unit:
 - RESOLVED, that the Western Iowa Synod Assembly direct the Western Iowa Synod Council to forward this resolution to the Church Council's Executive Committee for proper referral and disposition under the bylaws and continuing resolutions of this church.
- On those for consideration by the ELCA Church Council:
 - RESOLVED, that the Western Iowa Synod Assembly direct the Western Iowa Synod Council to forward this resolution to the Church Council for consideration and possible action.
- The Synod Assembly can memorialize the Churchwide Assembly. Memorials should be reserved, insofar as possible, for broader policy issues that belong in the Churchwide Assembly:
 - RESOLVED, that the Western Iowa Synod Assembly memorialize the ELCA Churchwide Assembly to. . . . (state action to be taken by Churchwide Assembly).

4. Remember that members of the Committee of Assembly Business and Counsel are available to help you put your resolution in proper form. The sooner resolutions are submitted, the more time will be available for the ABC committee to work with writers to edit their resolutions.

5. The deadline for submitting resolutions for consideration at the upcoming assembly is 60 days before the assembly. Each resolution submitted should have:

- A Title for the Resolution
- The signature of the assembly member(s) submitting the resolution.
- The Western Iowa Synod congregation(s) that the assembly member(s) belong to.
- The date when the resolution is submitted.

Signed copies of resolutions should be submitted to: Committee of Assembly Business and Counsel, Western Iowa Synod, PO Box 577, Storm Lake, IA 50588 or faxed to 712-732-6540. Additionally, to facilitate duplication of resolutions for assembly reports, please also submit your resolution electronically to wiscj@wisynod.org.