



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

Suggestions for Reference and Counsel Committees or Resolutions Committees

Thank you for serving in this leadership capacity. Your work on the Reference and Counsel Committee or Resolutions Committee is critical to the good of the order in the synod assembly. You have the power to put resolutions and memorials in the proper form, eliminate duplication where similar resolutions are offered, and ensure that all resolutions relating to a specific subject will be offered in logical sequence. Some committees also have the authority to make substantive edits and alterations in resolutions.

In all cases, your committee must report all resolutions and memorials referred to it, although the committee can report resolutions without a recommendation.

Here are some suggested tips before reporting resolutions or memorials to synod assembly:

- Determine if the proposed resolution is in proper format or has deficiencies in content. If it is not in the correct format or has deficiencies, then ask the writer to rewrite it or reconsider proposing the resolution.
- Resolutions or memorials should not call for unfunded mandates. If it does, some synods could call it out of order, or at the least, ask how the budgetary implications will be addressed.
- All memorials will be examined for staffing and financial implications. These implications will be shared in the background information to the churchwide assembly.
- Synod assemblies address synod councils or churchwide assemblies. Only synod councils address Church Council. Here are examples of addressees in proper format:

RESOLVED, that the [REDACTED] Synod Council request the Church Council to direct the presiding bishop to communicate this church's resolute commitment to the resettlement of refugees in the United States and encourage steadfast support for this program to the President and members of Congress.

RESOLVED that the [REDACTED] Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA, to ask its members and Presiding Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton to correspond with the U.S. President, the U.S. Department of State and members of Congress, asking them to urge the State of Israel to:

- A resolution and a memorial may NOT be combined in one action.
RESOLVED, that the [REDACTED] Synod request the ELCA Church Council, and memorialize the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly, to request that the presiding bishop communicate this church's resolute commitment to the resettlement of refugees in the United States and encourage steadfast support for this program to the President and Members of Congress.

If you receive a resolution with this wording, then amend it to address either the Synod Council to forward it to the Church Council or completely remove the reference to the ELCA Church Council and ONLY memorialize the ELCA Churchwide Assembly. Remember the synod assembly cannot address the Church Council. In addition, you cannot combine a resolution and a memorial.

- Resolutions and memorials may NOT direct the churchwide organization to take action. They are proposals requesting the specified action. If the resolved clause uses the word 'to direct...', then amend it 'to request...'.

Interested in more information? Please contact the Office of the Secretary (800-638-3522) or specifically the Executive for Governance (773-380-2599).