

## Write Your Resolution Right: A Quick & Easy Guide

1. Resolutions should be submitted by:
  - a congregation, or
  - a committee/conference (committee minutes indicating the resolution must be submitted with the resolution), or
  - a group of 10 voting members (their signatures, typed names, and phone numbers must be submitted with the resolution)

2. A resolution should be stated clearly and concisely.

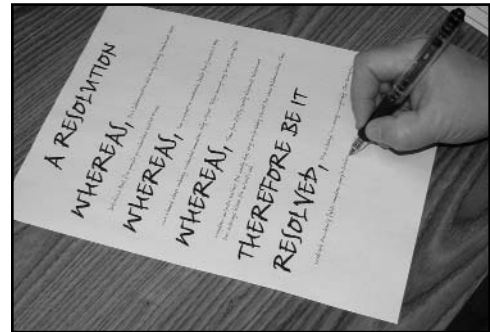
3. Resolutions should be tested before they are submitted. Ask yourself...

- Is the information in the resolution complete and accurate?
- Is this a matter which 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 which the synod can appropriately and effectively implement?
- Is this concern directed to the appropriate unit? Would be it be best directed toward the synod council, the executive committee, a synod committee, the synod staff, etc.?
- Do other people validate this idea? Have I tested it with other voting members, pastors, etc.?
- Does my resolution answer the following questions: WHAT should be done? WHO should act? WHAT ENTITY should bear the cost, if any, and what cost is anticipated? WHEN should the action be done? TO WHOM should the results be reported?
- If the resolution demands 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?

Resolutions must be in the synod office **within two days of your conference assembly** (by Feb. 10 if you meet on the scheduled day; by Feb. 17 if you meet on the snow day).

### Send Your Resolutions To:

Audree Catalano  
1001 14th St NW, Suite 300  
Rochester, MN 55901-2551  
E-mail: catalano@semnsynod.org  
Fax: 507-280-8824



Remember to write your resolution in the proper format (see next page for details).

### Remember - Direct Your Concern to the Appropriate Body!

The Churchwide Assembly has been swamped by memorials. Many of these concerns could be better addressed by sending resolutions to the ELCA Church Council. Please keep in mind that memorials may not be the only route for a synod to express concern.

Resolutions may be passed that are addressed to a specific Churchwide unit or to units that relate to a given concern. In the final "resolved" of such an assembly action, should be this provision:

For example:

RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Minnesota Synod Assembly direct the Southeastern Minnesota Synod Council to forward this resolution to the Church Council for consideration and possible action.

Resolutions follow a more direct route than memorials, which must go to the Churchwide Assembly, and await the assembly's response. Memorials should be reserved, insofar as possible, for broader policy issues that belong in the Churchwide Assembly. By contrast, resolutions may receive more immediate attention.

We are encouraged to route our resolutions through our Synod Council either to the Church Council or to the Church Council's Executive Committee. Our National Church policy affirms that:

- Synod Assemblies address the Churchwide Assembly;
- Synod Councils address the ELCA Church Council; and
- Synod Councils address Churchwide units through the ELCA Church Council's Executive Committee, including forwarding actions of the Synod Assembly.

## Resolution Format Guide

A resolution must be written in the following format:

**WHEREAS:** The WHEREAS sections clearly state the REASONS for the resolution. Each reason should be a separate WHEREAS.

**RESOLVED:** The RESOLVED sections clearly state the action(s) desired – what should be done, who should do it, how it should be done, and when it should be done. Each action should be a separate RESOLVED so the assembly may deal with them individually.

If a resolution requires one action, use the following format:

RESOLVED, \_\_\_\_\_.

If a resolution requires more than one action, the following format is used:

RESOLVED, \_\_\_\_\_; and  
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, \_\_\_\_\_.

If a resolution is preceded by a reason for submitting it, the following format is used:

WHEREAS, \_\_\_\_\_;  
THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, \_\_\_\_\_.

If a resolution is preceded by two or more reasons, the following format is used:

WHEREAS, \_\_\_\_\_; and  
WHEREAS, \_\_\_\_\_;  
THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, \_\_\_\_\_.

### **You must always include with your resolution:**

- a title for your resolution
- name of congregation and city (or committee, or conference) from which the resolution was originated
- date the resolution was submitted

### **If your resolution is being submitted by a conference or committee, you must also include:**

- typed name and signature of conference dean or committee chair,
- minutes from meeting at which the resolution was drafted/approved

### **If your resolution is being submitted by a group of 10 voting members, you must also include:**

- signature(s) of all those submitting the resolution (and their names and phone numbers, typed)
- name of the congregation and city from which the resolution was originated
- signature of the pastor or congregational president of that congregation

For examples of other resolutions, see [www.semnsynod.org/assembly/2003/assembly03.html](http://www.semnsynod.org/assembly/2003/assembly03.html)

## Get Your Resolutions Published in the Pre-Assembly Report!

By publishing your resolutions in the Pre-Assembly Report, voters will have more time to examine the resolutions and think about them before the Assembly. Please get your resolutions in as soon as possible. Resolutions must be in the synod office **within two days of your conference assembly** (by Feb. 10 if your conference assembly meets on the scheduled day; by Feb. 17 if they meet on the snow day). Resolutions not received within two days of the conference assembly will not be published in the Pre-Assembly Report.

## Resolutions Are Important at the Synod's "Annual Meeting"

It soon is time for many of you to hold your congregation's annual meeting. Such gatherings are a time for celebration and decision making for future ministry. The "experts" suggest that annual meetings in small congregations more often focus on the decision making...while in larger congregations the meeting is more celebration.

The Synod Assembly is our annual meeting. We are a large church with over 130,000 members. Our annual meeting leans toward celebration...with worship, fellowship, and growth opportunities. And all of that is important for our synod.

But decision making must also be part of our annual meeting. In the past, the number of people speaking to an issue has been limited. We have kept an eye on the clock, trying to include everyone and everything, and still adjourn at the appointed hour. I fear that sometimes there has been the indication that discussion and decision making around resolutions have been minimized, even pushed to the side. And in the process, we have received fewer and fewer resolutions.

There is no shortage of issues in our church... important matters that need to be brought before us. Resolutions are an important means of initiating such a process. During this year's synod assembly, we will make every effort

to bring resolutions front and center. We will also be asking in the assembly rules that debate, though alternating speakers pro and con, will not be limited to 3 speakers on each side. The assembly can always call to end debate if so needed.

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I invite and encourage you to present resolutions for consideration. I would ask that you be conscious of the deadline to have such resolutions included in the Pre-Assembly Report. Resolutions can also be submitted during the assembly, but the earlier submissions allow for more thorough preparation. I would also ask voting members from each church to gather prior to the assembly to discuss the assembly issues and resolutions...and to pray for our time together.

The annual meeting is a special opportunity for congregation and synod alike.

Shalom,



Harold Usgaard  
Bishop

