Welcome! Please mute yourself for the presentation and change your "displayed name" to include your name and synod.
Duties of the Synod Secretary

As †§8.32. in the Constitution for Synods illustrates:

The secretary shall:

a. Keep the minutes of all meetings of the Synod Assembly and Synod Council, be responsible for the printing and distribution of such minutes, and perform such other duties as this synod may from time to time direct.

b. Be authorized and empowered, in the name of this synod, to attest all instruments which require the same, and which are signed and sealed by the bishop.

c. In consultation with the bishop, classify and arrange all important papers and documents and deposit them in the archives of this synod.

d. Submit to the secretary of this church at least nine months before each regular Churchwide Assembly a certified list of the voting members elected by the Synod Assembly.
Online Resources

- elca.org/resources/office-of-the-secretary
- Congregations—Model Constitution, record retention, archiving
- Governance & Policy—Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline, memorials and resolutions
- Insurance & Risk Management—Brochures and documents from Church Mutual and the ELCA
- Synods—Constitution for Synods, Reports
- Bishop Elections—Bishop Election Toolkit, fillable PDF forms for candidates
Minutes

• Brief—consult Robert’s Rules for guidance
• Archival and historical document
• Legal and corporate record

Coding Actions

VOTED
SA 21.06.10
To adopt...

SA=Synod Assembly
SC=Synod Council
EC/SC=Executive Committee

Year
Month
Action Number
Action language
Archiving

From *Recommendations for Synod Secretaries*, page 2, section A: *The secretary shall*:

c. In consultation with the bishop, classify and arrange all important papers and documents and deposit them in the archives of this synod.

(†S8.32.)
The ELCA has a network of regional/synod archives that extend throughout the 9 geographic regions that comprise the ELCA.

Each Regional/Synod Archives is responsible for collecting the historical records of the synod, as well as records of closed ELCA congregations located in that region or synod.

The synod records retention schedule has current retention recommendations for records generated and/or retained by the synod. It is available on the Office of the Secretary Resources page under the “Synod” tab: https://elca.org/Resources/Office-of-the-Secretary#Synods

The ELCA Directory has the current contact information for each Regional/Synod Archives.
Synod Online Digital Archive (SODA)

What is SODA?

- A digital document repository/archive for synods that is accessed via ELCA Community. SODA is found on the synod portal page of ELCA Community. (community.elca.org)

How do we access SODA?

- Access SODA with your ELCA Community account after it has been given rights to access SODA by your synod’s Synod Role Manager.

What is uploaded to SODA?

- Synod Assembly minutes and reports; synod council agenda, minutes, exhibits; executive committee agenda, minutes, exhibits; synod constitutions; insurance policies; and synod policies and procedures. **Exception: **no executive session minutes**

Who can see our SODA holdings?

- Any synod staff or officer with rights to access SODA; the regional archivist for the region in which your synod is located; the official documentation manager, Office of the Secretary; ELCA Archivists, Office of the Secretary; and the SODA Administrator, Office of Secretary.
Updating Constitutions

• Constitution for Synods
  • †S18.11.: Automatic updates (mandatory provisions)
  • †S18.12.: Discretionary updates (non-mandatory provisions)
  • †S18.13.: Other changes
  • †S18.21.: Bylaws and continuing resolutions
  • †S18.31.: Report all updates

Constitutions
Each of this church’s expressions—congregations, synods and the churchwide organization—has a constitution.

• Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA

Synods
• 2019 Constitution for Synods

Congregations
• 2019 Model Constitution for Congregations
• 2019 Constitución Modelo para Congregaciones

Amendments
Each churchwide assembly has amended the constitutions.

• 2019 Amendments to the Model Constitution for Congregations
• 2019 Enmiendas a la Constitución Modelo para Congregaciones
• 2019 Recommended Amendments to the Constitution for Synods
• 2019 Required Amendments to the Constitution for Synods
• Rationale for the 2019 Amendments

It is recommended that ELCA congregations and synods review the adopted amendments for their constitutions as soon as possible after each churchwide assembly to incorporate the required changes and to consider the recommended changes.

Guide for Use of the Model Constitution for Congregations is a helpful reference for congregations reviewing their constitutions. Congregations are encouraged to work with their synod’s Constitution Committee from the outset of their work; this may ensure a greater likelihood that the synod will approve the proposed changes (∗C17:03., new ∗C16:03).
Corporate Filings

- Where is the synod incorporated?
- Are corporate filings up to date?
  - State of incorporation
  - State(s) of operation
- Who is the registered agent?
Terms and Election Timing

**Officers, Synod Council, and Committees**

- What is the term length?
- When do the terms expire?
- Who is eligible for reelection? (Who is term-limited?)

**Churchwide Assembly Voting Members and Churchwide Nominees**

- Build a spreadsheet.
- Schedule appropriate elections for the synod assembly.
- Ensure the Synod Council promptly fills vacancies.
Timely Meeting Notices

• For both Synod Assembly and Synod Council meetings
  • Comply with the constitution
  • Comply with state law
Memorials vs. Resolutions

**SYNOD ASSEMBLY**

MEMORIALS are adopted by synod assemblies and are forwarded to the Churchwide Assembly. These address broad policy issues or programs in the churchwide organization. Acted on every 3 years at the Churchwide Assembly.

**SYNOD COUNCIL**

RESOLUTIONS are adopted by synod councils and are forwarded to the Church Council. Resolutions recommend a specific action and may be more time sensitive as they can be addressed more quickly.

Which works best for what the writers wish to achieve?
Report Submission Process

- **Report of Synod Assembly Actions**
  - Officer elections and terms
  - Memorials from the Synod Assembly to forward to the Churchwide Assembly
  - Changes to the synod constitution in accord with †S18.12, †S18.13, †S18.21, or †S18.31.

- **Report of Synod Council Actions**
  - Resolutions from the Synod Council to forward to the Church Council.
  - Changes to synod constitution in accord with †S18.31.

- Also found at [elca.org/resources/office-of-the-secretary](http://elca.org/resources/office-of-the-secretary) under the “Governance” tab.

- Timely submissions needed in 2022 leading up to the 2022 Churchwide Assembly.
Reflections from a Former Synod Secretary: Minute-Taking

- Pre-populate minutes to track the agenda.
  - Particularly for the Synod Assembly, but also for Synod Council meetings.
- Bring a laptop or other device to type during meetings.
- Jot conversation text and refine when cleaning up minutes.
- Be clear about resolutions. Minutes are the record that will be used for clarification in the future.
Attendance at Meetings

- Try to attend every meeting possible.
  - A substitute secretary will probably not be as familiar with the desired format.

- You are more than a stenographer.
  - As an officer of the synod, you should also feel empowered to voice your thoughts in Synod Council and Executive Committee meetings.
Unexpected Duties of the Synod Secretary

Talk to synod staff and/or the bishop to learn the expectations of the secretary in your synod, particularly around Synod Assembly.

Other duties in my context:

- Presenting “Rules of Procedure,” “List of Excused,” and synod constitution changes to the Synod Assembly.
- Preparing a written Synod Council report for pre-assembly materials.
- Involvement with the synod’s Constitution Committee reviewing both the synod constitution and congregational constitutions.
- Assisting with allocating our synod’s voting member positions for Churchwide Assembly across conferences and demographic targets.
Unexpected Duties (continued)

Churchwide Organization

• Submissions to the churchwide organization, the ELCA Archives, and Regional Archives.
  • Remember to submit the report to the churchwide organization promptly after assembly.
  • Remember to upload approved minutes to the ELCA Archives (SODA) and share relevant documents with the regional archives.
  • Ask for help if you do not remember how to do these tasks.
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God’s work. Our hands.

Questions?

THANK YOU FOR SERVING THE ELCA IN THIS WAY!