



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

Constitutional Provisions for the Election of a Bishop

- S9.04.** The bishop shall be elected by the Synod Assembly by ecclesiastical ballot. Three-fourths of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election on the first ballot. If no one is elected, the first ballot shall be considered the nominating ballot. Three-fourths of the legal votes cast on the second ballot shall be necessary for election. The third ballot shall be limited to the seven persons (plus ties) who received the greatest number of legal votes on the second ballot, and who are willing to serve if elected. Two-thirds of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. The fourth ballot shall be limited to the three persons (plus ties) who receive the greatest number of legal votes on the third ballot, and 60 percent of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. On subsequent ballots a majority of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. These ballots shall be limited to the two persons (plus ties) who receive the greatest number of legal votes on the previous ballot.
- S9.04.A94.**
- 1) *Following the first ballot, reasonable efforts shall be made to contact nominees in order to determine their willingness to serve. The assembly shall be informed of those efforts as well as the responses of the nominees.
A nominee may withdraw from the process by informing the Committee on Bishop Elections by one of the following means:
 - a. written notification
 - b. email notification
 - c. verbal notice, in person or by electronic means, to 2 members of the election committee*
 - 2) *For the purpose of S9.04 of the Synod Constitution, a nominee shall be presumed willing to serve unless he or she has expressed an unwillingness to do so.*
 - 3) *When reasonable efforts have been made to contact a nominee, but have been unsuccessful, it shall be assumed that the nominee is willing to serve.*
 - 4) *No nominee willing to serve shall be a member of the contacting group.*
 - 5) *Biographical information about the nominees included on the third ballot shall be distributed to voting members of the assembly prior to that ballot.*
 - 6) *At a plenary session prior to the fourth ballot, the agenda shall include a forum at which nominees shall be permitted to respond to written questions posed by voting members to the Committee on Bishop Elections.*
 - 7) *Prior to the fifth ballot, the agenda shall include time for nominees to address the assembly for up to five minutes each.*

8) *Implementation of these rules of procedure shall be the responsibility of the Committee on Bishop Elections unless otherwise delegated by the Synod Council.*

S9.04.B17 *Process for preparing the Synod for the election of a Bishop*

When there is an election for a bishop where there is no incumbent, this synod shall use a three-stage process which will allow for those who will be voting members to the Synod Assembly at which a bishop will be elected to consider both the needs of the synod and persons who might exhibit the gifts to serve as bishop. This process shall begin the year prior to such election and conclude with the ecclesiastical ballot for bishop at the appointed Assembly. This process will not be required in the event of a special election for a bishop. The teams for this process shall be appointed by the Executive Committee in consultation with the Bishop and approved by the Synod Council. The teams shall be chaired by laypersons.

- A. *Stage One. A Transition Team shall develop a Synodical Mission Profile. Included in such a Mission Profile might be the latest demographics and vitality indicators of the congregations on the territory of the synod, updated demographic information on the rostered leaders serving in the synod, and an assessment of the hoped for direction of the synod and its ministry. This Synodical Mission Profile shall be completed by December 1st of the year prior to the election and made available upon completion.*
- B. *Stage Two. A Discernment Team shall develop a prayer-filled process for conversation and discernment across the synod. This process shall include ways to discuss the gifts for ministry that might be helpful to advance the Synodical Mission Profile and how to identify persons who might possess these gifts. The structure for this prayerful conversation shall include consideration of:
 - 1) *how persons with gifts for this ministry might be identified, e.g., who might raise up names, by what authority, and by what mechanism;*
 - 2) *how the names of those persons might be brought forward for discussion, e.g., through conference meetings, cluster meetings, or synod-wide gatherings;*
 - 3) *how the conversations about those brought forward might be structured so that their gifts for ministry might be explored;*
 - 4) *how these conversations might be shared across the synod for the edification of the whole.**

The process for these conversations shall be completed and shared by the time the Synodical Mission Profile is completed. These conversations shall begin after the completion of the Synodical Mission Profile and be completed at least one month prior to the election.

- C. *Stage Three. The Committee on Bishop Elections shall oversee the process of ecclesiastical ballot as specified in S9.04. No names raised in stage two of this process shall be on the ballot at the start of the Assembly. Any names to be placed in nomination shall be made from the floor of the Assembly on the first ballot.*