

Voting Member Information regarding Assembly Procedures for the 2021 Central States Synod Assembly

INTRODUCTION

Each synod assembly's authority and procedures must conform to the requirements of the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of the Central States Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The parliamentary procedures are shaped by the most current version of *Robert's Rules of Order*. Further, each assembly may adopt other specific rules to better conduct its business. Finally, time and experience has led to several ordinary practices that are carried over from assembly to assembly simply because they have proven to be effective.

For the most part, all of these organizational factors work well to provide an orderly framework within which each voting member may be fully and actively involved in the deliberative process of the assembly. However, at times, these same factors may seem artificially restrictive and notably frustrating if voting members do not know why a specific procedure is being followed or how they may participate at a particular moment.

In addition, the online format of this year's assembly may feel additionally restrictive. Please know that these rules and procedures have been thought out and evaluated by synod leadership as well as other synods conducting online assemblies and gatherings. The intent is to allow the assembly to reliably conduct the business of the synod in the most equitable and accessible format possible.

RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR CENTRAL STATES DIGITAL SYNOD ASSEMBLY

Prior to the assembly

- Each voting member must register to receive the zoom link, using an individual email address for each voting member. (For voting purposes, voting members may not share the same email address.)
- Each voting member must have their own device on which to join the meeting.
Voting members are to make sure that their full name is on the zoom meeting (last name first).
- Hearings for the budget, resolutions, and compensation guidelines will take place the week of assembly. (See the assembly material for schedule.) These hearings are open to any member of the synod.
- There will be several trial run "sessions" the week prior. (See the assembly material for the schedule)
Voting members may log in and explore the zoom features such as, the chat, polling, muting/unmuting, camera and view controls and sample how we will move through the agenda.

During the assembly

- Voting members can start logging in up to an hour and a half before the first session. This is necessary to allow assembly staff to 'check in' every voting member and to resolve any technical problems a voting member may have.
- When voting members log onto the zoom meeting, they will be in a waiting room until assembly staff verify that they are a registered voting member. (This is why it is helpful to have last names first.)
- Once voting members are in the zoom room, all will be muted and will be asked to turn off videos. Voting members will be asked to unmute and turn on video only when recognized by the chair.

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- Agenda items for discussion and vote that are moved by the synod council or a committee, do not need a second from the floor to be properly before the assembly.
- **To speak to on a motion before the assembly**, voting members must use the chat function and send a private request to the **“floor manager.”** In that request to speak, voting members are asked to use the following terms:
 - **For** (wish to speak in favor of the item being discussed)
 - **Against** (wish to speak in opposition to the item being discussed)
 - **Question** (have a question regarding the item being discussed)
 - **Amend** (would like to make an amendment. *Please include the text of the amendment in the chat*)
 - **Second** (if seconding an amendment or other motion on the floor)
 - **Call the question** (request that the debate be closed)
 - **Nomination** (Make a nomination from the floor)

The chair will call upon individuals in the order in which they appear in the chat (alternating when possible, those in favor and those opposed). Each individual will have no more than **two minutes** to speak once they are unmuted. Voting members are reminded to always begin their comments with their name and their congregation’s name and location.

- **Voting** (except for the elections) will be done using the polling feature of zoom. Once the chair discerns that there is no further discussion, a poll will appear with the options:
 - In favor
 - Opposed
 - Abstain

The chair will give the assembly 60 seconds to vote before the poll is closed. Results will be announced immediately with those results appearing on the screen. Only those voting members logged into zoom will be allowed to vote. (This is the reason each voting member must have their own device.)

- **Elections** will be done using Election Runner. (See the tutorials for instructions on downloading and accessing the app.) After nominations are closed and the ballot is ready, voting members will be instructed to use the app to cast their ballot. An e-mail will also be sent to each voting member which they can use to cast their ballot.
- The agenda includes time for individuals to share **“issues of conscience.”** Voting members may have two minutes to address the assembly. Individuals who would like to speak must send a private chat message to the **Floor Manager by 10:00 a.m. on Saturday**, stating their name, congregation, and the topic which they wish to address. At the designated time in the agenda, the chair will ask those voting members to unmute and speak on their issue.

REQUESTING HELP

- Voting members may request help by. . .
 - Sending a private message to **“help desk”** through the chat function of zoom.
 - Calling or texting **(913) 336-3111**. Please leave a message with your name, phone number and the issue you are having. A member of our tech support team will contact you as quickly as possible.
 - Additional help resources and materials are available on the synod website.
- Voting members may ask a question directly of the parliamentarian by sending a private chat to **“Parliamentarian”**.
- Voting members may submit prayer requests by sending a private chat message to **“Chaplain”**.

Whether you are attending your first assembly, or you have attended previous assemblies as a voting member, your full and active participation is both welcomed and necessary for the continued wellbeing of our synod.