

NW WA Synod Council Proposed Constitution and Bylaw Amendments for consideration at Synod Assembly 2021

The Synod Council has drawn up several constitution and bylaw amendments for consideration by the assembly. According to our synod constitution, the Synod Council may propose an amendment, with notice to be sent to the congregations of this synod at least six months prior to the next regular meeting of the Synod Assembly. A letter was sent to all congregations and rostered ministers on November 15. notification. Below you will find the proposed new language followed by a brief description of the rationale for each of the changes.

The first of the proposed amendments was alluded to at our 2019 Synod Assembly. In order to bring our council terms in line with our new three-year cycle of Synod Assemblies and Synod Gatherings, the synod council would like to amend the constitution to change the terms of office for council members from four years to three years. To that end, the Synod Council proposes that section **S10.08** be amended as follows:

S10.08. ~~Except for the elections at the constituting convention,~~ Adult members of the Synod Council shall be elected for a term of ~~four~~ **three** years. Adult members may not be elected to the Synod Council for more than two consecutive terms; provided, however, a member of the Synod Council may be elected to serve as an officer, in which case ~~he or she~~ **they** may serve in that capacity and be re-elected pursuant to S8.51.

The rest of the amendments deal with nominations and elections (Chapter 9 of the constitution). Our intent is to make the language of our governing documents cleaner and more flexible as we live into God's future.

The proposed constitutional amendments are as follows:

S9.03. There shall be a Nominating Committee consisting of not less than ~~seven~~ **three** members who shall be appointed by the Synod Council. ~~Additional nominations may be made from the floor for all elections for which nominations are made by the Nominating Committee. The~~ **Nominating Committee will request additional nominations from the floor for all or a portion of open positions. How floor nominations will be made will be described in Continuing Resolutions.**

S9.05. The Nominating Committee shall nominate at least one person for vice president; ~~additional nominations may be made from the floor.~~

S9.06. The Synod Council shall nominate at least one person for secretary; ~~additional nominations may be made from the floor.~~

The change to **S9.03** is to address the concern that requiring a minimum of seven members of the Nominating Committee is excessive given the current size of the synod. Three seems a more reasonable minimum and gives us the flexibility to create a larger committee should the need arise. We also wanted to clarify the language around floor nominations and indicate where the procedure for such nominations would be found. The changes to **S9.05** and **S9.06** simply delete what we feel to be redundant language.

Finally, the Synod Council proposes the following bylaw amendments:

- S9.03.01** The Synod Council shall appoint one of the members of the Nominating Committee as chairperson. The chairperson shall convene the Nominating Committee no less than six months prior to the regular meeting of the Synod Assembly. The Nominating Committee shall establish a procedure to elicit qualified candidates from the congregations in this synod. The Nominating Committee shall nominate at least ~~two~~ **one** persons for the office of Vice President, **Secretary**, and for each council, board, committee or Churchwide assembly member position for which an election will be held by the Synod Assembly. The Nominating Committee shall report its nominations to the Synod Council, which shall communicate the report to the congregations in this synod no less than thirty days before the Synod Assembly.
- S9.03.02.** Except for the election for bishop, ~~nominations may be made from the floor for all elections by the Synod Assembly.~~ **P the Nominating Committee may deem it appropriate to have nominations from the floor for a particular election. Then those** persons nominated from the floor must meet the prerequisites for the position for which they are nominated, as set forth in the constitution, bylaws, or by the Synod Council in advance of the Synod Assembly. No floor nominations shall be made unless the person making the nomination certifies that the person nominated is willing to serve, meets the prerequisites for the position for which he or she is nominated, and is prepared to provide in a timely manner the same biographical data and other information to the members of the Synod Assembly as are required of persons nominated by the Nominating Committee. The failure to meet these prerequisites shall preclude a person nominated from the floor from appearing on the ballot.
- S9.11.03.** Members of the Synod Council shall be elected by majority vote of the Synod Assembly. The order of elections shall be as provided in S10.07.01. The names of all persons nominated by the Nominating Committee or from the floor in accordance with S9.03., S9.03.01., and S9.03.02. shall be placed on the first ballot for the positions for which they have been nominated, unless a nominee withdraws in writing. If a person or persons receive a majority of the votes cast for a position on the ~~first~~ ballot, ~~he or she (they)~~ **they** shall be elected to the Synod Council for that position. ~~If no one is elected or if additional vacancies remain for a position, a second ballot shall be taken, and the ballot shall contain the names of all the persons who received more than a pro rata share of the votes on the previous ballot; provided, however, that if the same number of persons or fewer received pro rata shares of votes as vacancies to be filled, the ballot shall contain the names of the persons receiving the greatest number of votes in the previous ballot up to the number of vacancies to be filled plus one. For purpose of this provision, a pro rata share of the votes shall be determined by dividing the total number of votes cast for all candidates for a position by the number of candidates for that position. If a person or persons receive a majority of votes for a position on the second ballot, he or she (they) shall be elected to the Synod Council for that position. If no one is elected or if additional vacancies remain for that position, a third ballot shall be taken. The third ballot, and subsequent ballots, if necessary, shall be taken in the manner of the second ballot until all vacancies for each~~

~~position are filled. If necessary, further rules for election will be stated in the Standing Rules of the Assembly.~~

~~**S9.11.05.** Except as otherwise provided in the constitution and bylaws, in all elections the names of the persons receiving the highest number of votes, but not elected by a majority of votes cast on a previous ballot, shall be entered on the next ballot to the number of two for each vacancy unfilled.~~

S10.07.01. Persons shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee ~~or from the floor~~ and elected by the Synod Assembly to fill specific positions on the Synod Council. The Northwest Washington Synod is committed to developing a Synod Council whose demographic reflects the strategic and authentic diversity of our communities.

The positions are as follows:

<u>Positions</u>	<u>Designation</u>
1	Youth
1	Young Adult
1	Rostered Minister of Word and Service
1	Male layperson of color and/or whose primary language is other than English
1	Female layperson of color and/or whose primary language is other than English.
1	Rostered Minister of Word and Sacrament of color and/or whose primary language is other than English.
3 to 5	Male laypersons
3 to 5	Female laypersons
1	Lay person (unrestricted)
3	Rostered ministers (either roster)

The election for the Synod council shall be described in the Standing Rules of the Assembly.

~~The election for Synod Council shall occur in two phases. In the first phase, elections shall take place for a youth, for a young adult, for an active Rostered Minister of Word and Service, for a male layperson of color and/or whose primary language is other than English, for female layperson of color and/or whose primary language is other than English, for a rostered Minister of Word and Sacrament of color and/or whose primary language is other than English. When the first phase of elections for the Synod Council has been completed, the Nominating Committee shall determine the number of male laypersons (unrestricted), and female laypersons (unrestricted) to be elected to the Synod Council in order to comply with TS6.04. Thereafter, in the second phase, elections shall take place for male laypersons (unrestricted), for female laypersons (unrestricted), and for~~

~~Rostered Ministers (either roster). Persons nominated but not elected to positions for persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English may be nominated for other positions from the floor, provided that they meet the prerequisites for them. The procedure for elections to Synod Council shall be as provided in S9.11.03.~~

~~**S10.07.02.** Persons nominated for the offices of Vice President, Secretary or Treasurer and not elected to that office may be nominated from the floor for an unrestricted position on the Synod Council, provided that they meet the prerequisites for that position and agree to such nomination.~~

~~**S10.08.01.** Following the elections at the constituting convention, the Synod Council shall determine the initial terms of office of its members. As nearly as possible, 50 percent of the ordained ministers, 50 percent of the lay male members, and 50 percent of the lay female members of the Synod Council elected at the constituting convention shall serve a term of four years. Members of the Synod Council elected at the constituting convention serving two year terms may be nominated for re election by the Synod Assembly in 1990 and 1994. Members of the Synod Council elected at the constituting convention serving four year terms may be nominated for re election by the Synod Assembly in 1992.~~

The change to **S9.03.01** changes the number of people who must be nominated by the Nominating Committee from two to one. This reflects the reality that it is sometimes very difficult to find two qualified nominees for each position. Additionally, it allows for the Nominating Committee to nominate a slate of candidates in situations where that may be appropriate.

S9.03.02 makes the bylaw language conform to the newly proposed constitutional language around floor nominations.

The change to **S9.11.03** simplifies the election process by stating that an individual receiving a majority of the votes will be declared elected to the position and deletes language outlining a runoff scenario. It also provides for further rules for the election to be stated in the Standing Rules of the Assembly.

S9.11.05 is deleted because the change to **S9.11.03** make it redundant.

The change to **S10.07.01** deletes the language outlining the procedure for the elections to Synod Council and provides for that procedure to be described in the Standing Rules of the Assembly.

S10.08.01 refers to the council members elected at the constituting convention which has long since passed.

In addition to these amendments proposed by the Synod Council, the Synod Assembly will also be asked to vote on required and recommended changes to the Synod Constitution that were approved by the 2019 Churchwide Assembly. See our assembly website for those documents:

www.lutheransnw.org/synod-assembly.