

Memorial to Restructure the Governance of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Frequently Asked Questions

Who drafted this memorial? The memorial was originally drafted by the Lower Susquehanna Synod led by Bishop Jim Dunlop.

What does a memorial do? If passed by the NT-NL Synod Assembly the memorial is then sent to the churchwide Assembly (to be held in Columbus, OH August 8-12, 2022) encouraging it to do the action in the “Resolved” clause.

Is this memorial simply asking for another strategic plan? No. Strategic Directions 2025 called the ELCA to take steps to be a “well-governed, connected, and sustainable church.” This memorial is calling for the Church Council to take action to implement this direction.
https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Future_Directions_Paper_Called_Forward_Together_in_Christ.pdf

Will this change the ELCA structure? Yes. How it will be changed will be determined by the commission and then presented to the churchwide assembly in 2025. If accepted by that assembly a special assembly would be called to reconstitute the ELCA under the new guidelines.

Why is a reconstitution of the ELCA needed? The ELCA’s current constitution and structure was formulated for a very different time and church body. As the memorial outlines, in the 34 years since the formation of the ELCA, both the church and the context in which the church does its work has changed dramatically.

What does this mean for our synod? The memorial calls for a plan to be developed. It is highly possible the size and number of synods could be impacted by such a plan. The commission will be charged with that work.

What does this mean for our congregation? Congregational life and governance will likely carry on as currently constituted. However, the synod you relate to could change.

Who will be on the commission? The memorial charges the elected Church Council of the ELCA to form the commission.

Will the commission be able to make any changes it wants? No. Any changes called for by the commission will have to be accepted by the 2025 churchwide assembly (made up of 60% lay members/40% ordained). That assembly would then call a special reconstituting assembly which would ultimately decide what the structure is.

Is Bishop Eaton aware of this memorial? Bishop Eaton has been made aware such a memorial may be coming from synods to the churchwide assembly.