
Governing Document of the Association of Synod Vice Presidents of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)

Section I – Preamble

Rooted in our shared call to servant leadership in the life of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Association of Synod Vice Presidents (ASVP) exists as a collaborative community of lay leaders called and elected to serve their synods in the office of vice president. Recognizing the diversity, gifts, and faith of our membership, and grounded in our baptismal vocation, we commit ourselves to mutual support, formation, and faithful governance for the sake of the church's mission in the world.

Section II – Name and Purpose

1. Name: The name of this body shall be the Association of Synod Vice Presidents of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
2. Purpose: The ASVP serves as a collegial and consultative body, composed of the vice presidents of the synods of the ELCA, for mutual support and leadership development. Its primary goals are:
 - a. To strengthen the leadership capacity of synod vice presidents;
 - b. To provide opportunities for orientation, worship, spiritual renewal, continuing education, collaboration, and leadership development;
 - c. To foster relationships of trust and accountability among synod vice presidents and with the broader structures of this church;
 - d. To assist vice presidents in their collaborative roles with bishops and synod councils;
 - e. To offer a forum for developing goals, objectives, and strategies concerning lay leadership within the ELCA;
 - f. To provide advice and counsel to the Church Council, Office of the Presiding Bishop, and Conference of Bishops when requested;
 - g. To promote cultural competency and equity in leadership across the church.

Section III – Membership

1. Members: Membership consists of the currently serving vice presidents of the 65 synods of the ELCA.
2. Non-Voting Participants:
 - a. The Churchwide Vice President shall be a member with voice but not vote;
 - b. The Church Council may appoint a liaison with voice but not vote;
 - c. The Conference of Bishops may appoint a synod bishop as a liaison with voice but not vote.

Section IV – Gatherings and Participation

1. Frequency: The Association shall meet formally at least once annually, be it in person or digitally to conduct official Association business. The Association may gather informally online or in person as desired.
2. Quorum: A quorum shall consist of a simple majority of the members.
3. Participation: Members are expected to engage in cultural competency training at each in-person meeting.

Section V – Leadership

1. Officers: The officers of the Association shall be a Chair and a Vice Chair, elected for a one-year term that is renewable once.
2. Responsibilities of the Chair:
 - a. Preside at meetings of the Association;
 - b. Serve as the public representative of the Association;
 - c. Convene committees, teams, and taskforces of the association;
 - d. Communicate with ELCA churchwide staff, the Church Council, and the Conference of Bishops as needed;
 - e. Ensure that the responsibilities of the Association are carried out faithfully.
3. Responsibilities of the Vice Chair:
 - a. Preside in the absence or incapacity of the Chair;
 - b. Assist the Chair in their duties;
 - c. Assume the office of Chair if vacated before the end of the term until a new Chair is elected.
4. The Chair and Vice Chair shall be elected at a duly called meeting of the association by simple majority.

Section VI – Committees, Teams, Taskforces

1. Formation: The Association may form committees, teams, or taskforces to carry out its responsibilities.
2. Planning Team: A standing committee of the Association. It shall:
 - a. Be composed of a representative group of synod vice presidents including the Chair and Vice Chair;
 - b. Help organize gatherings of the Association, including planning of programming, worship, and community-building activities;
 - c. Facilitate leadership development opportunities and trainings;
 - d. Support communication and engagement between in-person meetings.
3. Additional Committees, Teams, or Taskforces: These may be formed as needed by the Association to address specific areas of focus.

Section VII – Governance and Revisions

1. Alignment: The Association shall operate in alignment with the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA.
2. Boundaries: This document does not alter or expand the responsibilities of synod vice presidents as outlined in the constitutions of the ELCA or its synods.
3. Revisions: Proposed revisions may be submitted in writing by any member. Adoption of revisions requires a two-thirds (2/3) vote of members present at a duly called meeting. Written notice must be given 30 days prior to a vote.
4. Additions: Proposed additions may be submitted in writing by any member. Adoption of additions requires a majority vote of members present at a duly called meeting. Written notice must be given 30 days prior to a vote.

Section VIII – Staff Support

Staff services for meetings and gatherings of the Association shall be provided by the Synod Relations Staff in the Office of the Secretary of the ELCA, in consultation with the Chair.