

Guidance for the Identification of Nominees for Synod Consultation Committees in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

The purpose of this document is to assist synod nominating committees in identifying individuals gifted for the vital ministry of consultation. These tools may also be of use to individuals who are discerning whether they are being called to service on a Consultation Committee. We invite all who engage these materials to do so prayerfully, trusting that God calls and equips leaders to serve the Church for the sake of repentance, reconciliation, justice, and peace.

As God's people gathered in the community of the Church, we are called to "make every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:2). Yet we confess that, because of human sin, we do not always live out this calling faithfully. Even within the Church, relationships are wounded, trust is broken, and conflict arises. At the same time, we live by God's promise that grace is greater than our failure and that reconciliation is possible through the work of the Holy Spirit.

Grounded in the gospel and guided by the Holy Spirit, this church acknowledges the reality of conflict but faces it truthfully and faithfully. Following the teaching of Jesus (Matthew 18:15–17) and the apostolic call to resolve disputes within the community of faith (1 Corinthians 6:1–8), the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has committed itself to practices of accountability, reconciliation, and mutual care as essential marks of Christian community (*ELCA Constitution* 20.16.).

The primary pastoral office entrusted with fostering reconciliation at the synod level of this church is the office of bishop. Called to a ministry of oversight and unity, synod bishops receive concerns from ministers, congregations, and members of this church and exercise their teaching and pastoral responsibilities to address these concerns in ways that strengthen the unity of this church. (*Constitution for Synods* †S8.12.h.). At times, the complexities of conflict require the wisdom, experience, and shared discernment of additional leaders. In such circumstances, the synod bishop may call upon the ministry of a Synod Consultation Committee.

Consultation Committees are elected by the Synod Assembly and are composed of both rostered ministers and lay persons. (*Constitution for Synods* †S11.02.). These committees serve as trusted partners to the synod bishop by listening carefully, examining situations prayerfully, and offering counsel shaped by Scripture, the Lutheran Confessions, and this church's constitutional commitments.

The synod bishop may request the assistance of a Consultation Committee in situations such as:

- Offering guidance and referrals when conflict arises within a congregation;
- Assisting in the restoration of the relationship between a minister and a congregation through pastoral counsel and restorative processes;
- Assisting the synod bishop in investigation of a complaint or controversy involving a rostered minister;
- Recommending to the synod bishop whether to take any action, which may include initiation of disciplinary charges regarding a rostered minister; and
- Carrying out other responsibilities as outlined in Chapter 20 of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*.

The following rubric is designed to assist in identifying Synod Consultation Committee nominees. It may also be helpful to persons discerning whether or not to allow their names to be put forward for election to service on a Consultation Committee.

Rubric for Selecting Nominees for a Synod Consultation Committee

Creating a rubric for selecting individuals to be put forward as nominees for a Synod Consultation Committee is a great way to ensure a fair and thorough nomination process. The tool provided on the next page of this document can be utilized in two ways:

- Use as a set of qualities you are looking for in potential Consultation Committee nominees or share with interested persons to make them aware of the qualities required prior to allowing their names to be put forward for possible election.
- If there are multiple persons interested in serving on the committee and to encourage objectivity in choosing among potential nominees, use this rubric to assess potential nominees' qualities to put the strongest nominees forward. In addition, the rubric can be used to advise interested individuals not selected as nominees regarding areas in which they may want to improve or gain more experience. One possible ranking framework is:
 - 1 = Developing:** The quality is emerging; the potential nominee demonstrates limited experience or understanding;
 - 2 = Proficient:** The potential nominee demonstrates the quality with some relevant experience and is generally reliable;
 - 3 = Exemplary:** The potential nominee clearly demonstrates the quality with strong experience and consistent application.

Rate each potential nominee and advance those with the highest scores to the ballot.

Synod Consultation Committee Nomination Rubric

Quality	Description	Rank (1/2/3)
Commitment to this Church	Demonstrates a deep and active engagement with the life and mission of the ELCA. This includes regular participation in worship and congregation activities, support for this church's values and teachings, and a willingness to contribute time, talent, and resources to advance its ministries. Nominees should show a history of involvement in ELCA initiatives, volunteer service, or leadership roles that reflect loyalty, responsibility, and a desire to strengthen the faith community.	
Experience with Matters Requiring Confidentiality	Possesses experience handling sensitive information with discretion, such as personnel matters, call committees, or search committees. Demonstrates trustworthiness and the ability to maintain confidentiality in complex or high-stakes situations.	
Leadership Experience Outside this Church	Has experience managing people or projects, resolving conflicts, or navigating crises, showing the ability to remain calm, fair, and solution-focused under pressure.	
Experience in Matters Requiring Teamwork, Collaboration, and Consultation	Has a proven record of working effectively in teams, fostering collaboration, and providing guidance or mentorship. Demonstrates respect for diverse perspectives and the ability to build consensus.	
Problem-Solving Skills and Independent Thinking	Shows strong analytical and critical thinking abilities. Can assess complex situations, identify root causes of conflicts, and develop practical solutions independently while considering the broader impact on the community. Demonstrates good judgment.	
Willingness to Serve	Exhibits readiness and capacity to commit to the responsibilities of the role, including attending meetings, completing tasks, and engaging fully in the process. Demonstrates reliability and flexibility in scheduling.	
Commitment to Diversity	Values and actively supports diversity, equity, and inclusion within this church and the broader community. Demonstrates openness to different cultural, theological, and personal perspectives and works to create an environment where all voices are heard and respected.	
Total		