

Should Our Synod Be Submitting a Memorial or a Resolution?

Synods make requests of the Church Council and Churchwide Assembly using resolutions and memorials. As secretary, people may ask you for help understanding memorials and resolutions. This sheet is intended to help you respond to such requests (and know what to do with memorials and resolutions when you receive them).

Deciding whether a memorial or a resolution is appropriate

To decide whether a memorial or a resolution is appropriate for the action being requested, two questions need to be answered.

- What type of action is being requested?
- Should the request for action be addressed to the Church Council or the Churchwide Assembly?

Memorials:

- Request actions related to **broad policies** of this church;
- Are addressed to the **Churchwide Assembly**; and
- Can only be submitted by the **Synod Assembly**. The Synod Council does not have authority to approve memorials.

Resolutions:

- Request specific, limited actions by **the Church Council** or by **offices/units of the churchwide organization at the direction of the Church Council**;
- Are addressed to the **Church Council** or the **Executive Committee of the Church Council**; and
- May be submitted by the **Synod Assembly** or the **Synod Council**.

Sample memorial and resolution subjects

- **The following are examples of appropriate subjects for memorials:**
 - A proposal to establish a commission to reconsider the way this church is governed;
 - A proposal to commit the churchwide organization to reducing carbon emissions and to encouraging synods and congregations to do the same;
 - A proposal to evaluate and update the call processes of this church.
- **The following are examples of appropriate subjects for resolutions:**
 - Proposals to change the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA*. The Church Council recommends changes to the *Constitutions* of this church before each Churchwide Assembly;
 - A proposal to provide additional funding to a churchwide ministry. The Church Council is responsible for revising spending authorizations in the churchwide organization budget;
 - A proposal for the Church Council to direct the Service and Justice unit of the churchwide organization to change the way it supports persons displaced by climate change.

Additional points

- A memorial and a resolution should **not be combined** into one action. A synod should **not** request action by both the Church Council and the Churchwide Assembly on the same subject.
- The Office of the Secretary, with the agreement of the Executive Committee of the Church Council, may reclassify a request from a resolution to a memorial or *vice versa*.