



2025 Synod Assembly FAQ

Who should participate in the Synod Assembly?

Everyone! The congregation elects voting members to conduct the synod's business, including elections, budget, and policy approvals. However, the Assembly is also an opportunity for education and fellowship. Anyone is welcome to register as a visitor and enjoy the presentations, worship, and business. You may also view the live stream online on the synod's YouTube page.

Important Dates to Remember

What important dates do I need to keep in mind?

Monday, March 3	Registration Opens
Friday, April 11	Early Bird Registration Closes
Thursday, May 1	Congregation Significant Event Form Closes Deadline for Reports to be included in the Bulletin of Reports <i>(If received after this date, it will not be included in the Bulletin of Reports but in a later supplement.)</i>
Wednesday, May 14	Resolution Form Closes Nomination Form Due Lay Voting Credential Form Due Ministry Display Form Closes Appointed At-Large Voting Member Request Form Due
Tuesday, June 3	Lay Voting Credential Form Closes <i>(Under the Synod Constitution, Lay Voting Credentials must be received for each lay voting member ten days before the Assembly's beginning. If a Lay Voting Credential is not received and confirmed by the Synod Office, you cannot vote.)</i> Event Registration Closes <i>(per the constitution)</i>

Voting Information

How many voting members can my congregation send?

The Synod Constitution outlines this in S7.21. All rostered ministers (Word and Sacrament or Word and Service) under call on the roster of this synod shall be voting members. Congregations may elect two lay members if they have fewer than 400 baptized members, one of whom shall be a male and one of whom shall be a female (S7.21.03.). For more information on lay voting members, [click here](#).

Additional lay member representation from each congregation is as follows:

401-600 baptized members: 1 additional	801-1,000 baptized members: 3 additional
601-800 baptized members: 2 additional	1,001-1,200 baptized members: 4 additional

Do Synod Council Members count toward my congregation's total number of voting members?

No. Since the Assembly elects them, they attend as a Synod Council member without changing the number of eligible lay voting members from a congregation.

Can my congregation elect a pastor or deacon to serve as a lay voting member?

No. Since pastors and deacons are ordained, rostered ministers, they cannot be elected as lay voting members.

Can my congregation elect our currently authorized and serving synod authorized minister as a lay voting member?

No. Currently, authorized and serving SAMs are already granted voting privileges: "Consistent with †S7.21., lay persons who have been authorized and appointed by the bishop as Synod Authorized Ministers may serve as voting members of the Virginia Synod Assembly, during the period of their authorization. (S7.26.B24.)"

Does a voting member need a smart device for the Synod Assembly?

No, a voting member is not required to have a smart device to participate in the assembly. While updates will be made live to the assembly webpage, any information that will be voted on will also be displayed on the large screens. Printed materials can be provided if requested when registering. Voting will take place using methods that do not require a smart device.

Appointed At-Large Lay Voting Members

The Virginia Synod Constitution authorizes the Synod Council to appoint at-large voting members of the annual Synod Assembly in addition to those elected by congregations:

1. Up to 10 at-large voting members who are **persons of color and/or whose primary language is other than English.** (S7.21.A22.)
2. Up to 10 at-large members who are **youth and/or young adults.** (as defined in †S6.04.02.) [18 - 30 years old at the time of the Assembly] (S7.21.B22.)

Please [complete this form](#) if you want to be appointed as an at-large voting member.

Rostered Ministers who are Retired, On Leave from Call, or on Disability Leave

Subject to †S7.22.01. and †S7.22.02. (that at least 60 percent of the voting membership of the Synod Assembly shall be composed of laypersons), all rostered ministers on the roster of this synod in attendance at the Synod Assembly who are retired, on leave from call, or have been granted disability roster status by the Synod Council shall be voting members.

2025 Synod Assembly Elections**About the Positions Being Elected****What is the Virginia Synod Council?**

The Virginia Synod Council serves a visionary role in the Virginia Synod. In conjunction with the Bishop's Office, the Council reviews and coordinates all planning proposals and establishes synod priorities. The Synod Council members share their various gifts for the purposes of God's mission and ministry through the Virginia Synod and the churchwide organization of the ELCA.

The Synod Council also serves as the Virginia Synod board and meets quarterly to supervise the Synod administration. The Synod Assembly elects these leaders. The Synod Council is composed of congregation members from across the Virginia Synod, including rostered ministers (pastors and deacons) and lay people (those not ordained).

What are the Responsibilities of the Committee on Discipline?

The Virginia Synod Committee on Discipline serves the Consultation and Discipline Process in this church. The consultation and discipline process assures due process and due protection for the accused, other parties, and this church in the discipline process, which governs officers, rostered ministers, congregations, and members of congregations. When charges are brought following the consultation process, the detailed Disciplinary Process outlined in the [ELCA Constitution and Bylaws \(Ch. 20\)](#) takes effect.

What are the Responsibilities of an ELCA Churchwide Council Member?

The Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is both the board of directors of a Minnesota nonprofit corporation and the interim legislative authority of the churchwide organization, one of the three “expressions” of a denomination with deep roots in the U.S. In fulfilling its dual constitutional roles, the Church Council exercises fiduciary, strategic, and generative responsibilities to govern the ELCA churchwide organization. The full explanation of [roles and responsibilities is linked here](#).

[For more information, see our roles to be elected at the 2025 Synod Assembly.](#)

What are the conference partnerships in the Virginia Synod?

In January 2019, Synod Council approved the following conference partnerships:

- Coastal (Tidewater and Peninsulas Conferences)
- Piedmont (Richmond and Germanna Conferences)
- Valley (Northern Valley, Central Valley, and Page Conferences)
- Blue Ridge (Southern Valley and Southern Conferences)
- Appalachia (New River and Highlands Conferences)

To see a map of our conferences and partnerships, [click here](#).

Registration Information

What do I need to know if I register someone else or a group of people before starting the registration process?

Each registrant needs to supply the following information:

- You will need to know what registration type to choose for each person.
 - Rostered Ministers (under call, retired, on leave from call, or disability leave)
 - Synod Council (rostered minister or lay voting member)
 - Synod Authorized Minister (actively serving)
 - Lay Voting Member
 - Lay Synod Council Appointed At-Large Voting Member (Approved by Synod Council)
 - Visitor
 - Official Visitor (Invited by Virginia Synod)
 - Seminarian (Invited by Virginia Synod)
 - Ecumenical Guest
- Prefix/Title (e.g. Rev., Deacon, Mr., Ms., Mx., Sister, Brother, Pastor, Minister, Vicar)
- First Name and Last Name
- Registrant Pronouns
- Name of your Congregation (*or Organization*) and Location
- Registrant Preferred Mailing Address
- Registrant Preferred Phone (*The number we can reach you if necessary*)

- Registrant Email Address *(all event updates will be sent to this address)*
- Inclusivity Goals *(The following three questions help us determine if the Virginia Synod is meeting its goals for inclusivity.)*
 - Gender
 - Age at Assembly (Under 18, 18-30, 31 or older, or prefer not to answer)
 - Racial/Ethnic Background
 - Is English your primary language
- Dietary Restrictions
- Does the registrant wish to receive a paper copy of the Bulletin of Reports? *(The Bulletin of Reports will be emailed to all registrants and available on the Synod Assembly webpage. If yes, it will be picked up when checking into the event.)*
- Does the registrant wish to receive a paper copy of the worship services? *(If yes, it will be picked up when checking into the event.)*
- Form of payment (credit/debit card) to cover registration costs.
- Lay Voter Credential Form *(the rostered minister or council president will need to complete this form for all lay voting members only)*

What is covered in the registration fees?

The cost of the Assembly reflects the actual cost of holding the Assembly, including the cost of six meals, rental of facilities from Roanoke College, projection and audio equipment, voting resources for the elections, and other miscellaneous items for the Assembly, like printing and office supplies. The Office of the Bishop makes every effort to conduct a quality Assembly and balance rising costs by utilizing volunteers, soliciting sponsors and donations, and being good stewards of our gifts.

Do rostered ministers who are retired, on leave from call, or on disability leave get a discount?

Yes, the registration category for retired rostered ministers, on leave from call, or on disability leave already has a discount applied. In order to receive the additional early bird discount, participants must register before April 11 to receive the early bird discount.

How do I know I am registered?

When your registration is complete, you will immediately receive a confirmation email. Please check your spam or junk mail folder if you have not received a confirmation email. If still unsure, contact Debbie Hux at hux@vasynod.org or 540-389-1000 to confirm your registration.

How do I know if the lay voting credential form is received?

When the lay voting credential form is submitted, the email typed in the registration form will immediately receive a confirmation email with a copy of the completed form attached. Please check your spam or junk mail if you did not receive this confirmation email. If you are still unsure, you can contact Lenae Osmondson at osmondson@vasynod.org.

Hotel Information

We have created [blocks of hotel rooms](#) at discounted rates and encourage attendees to use them when making hotel reservations. Plan to make reservations early, as various events are occurring in the area during the assembly weekend and group hotel blocks start to expire on May 12.

Pre-Assembly Information

Pre-assembly online gatherings will be offered to help prepare assembly attendees or anyone who wants to learn more about the assembly. See the assembly webpage for more information.

Voting Member Orientation

If you have not participated as a voting member for a Synod Assembly, we will have an orientation on Friday, June 13 at 11:30-noon in the Chapel at Roanoke College. We encourage you to participate in the pre-assembly meetings as well.

Technology Information

WiFi should be available at the Cregger Center for voting members who wish to access the Virginia Synod Assembly web page. The web page will provide updated information on the event during the weekend, but you are not required to have access to the internet to participate or to vote.

Event Information

Will Synod Assembly be livestreamed?

The Synod Assembly will be livestreamed on the Virginia Synod YouTube channel. Stay up to date with videos as they happen live, or you can watch them after the Synod Assembly.

What if I have other questions about Assembly?

For the most up-to-date information, look at our Assembly webpage at vasynod.org/2025-virginia-synod-Assembly. You may also contact the Synod Office at 540-389-1000 or 757-622-9421.

- **General Assembly Questions:** Jody Smiley, Assembly Manager, assembly@vasynod.org
- **Registration Questions:** Debbie Hux at hux@vasynod.org or 540-389-1000
- **Nomination/Election Questions:** Jody Smiley, Assembly Manager, assembly@vasynod.org
- **Constitution Questions:** Skip Zubrod at zubrod@vasynod.org or 540-389-1000
- **Assembly Form Questions:** Lenae Osmondson at osmondson@vasynod.org or 757-622-9421
- **Bulletin of Reports Questions:** Lenae Osmondson at osmondson@vasynod.org or 757-622-9421
- **Mission Partner Questions:** Pastor John Wertz Jr. at wertz@vasynod.org

