

1 **Resolution 6** **Source: NWMN Synod Council Recommendation: Do Pass**

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3 **Revision to Continuing Resolution S9.04.C17**
4 **(Election of the Synod Bishop – Pre-Identification Process)**
5 **TO REPLACE S9.04.C17**

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8 **WHEREAS**, the synod seeks to conduct the election of a bishop in a manner that reflects both
9 good order and broad participation in the discernment of leadership; and

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11 **WHEREAS**, many synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America have adopted shorter
12 and more clearly defined timelines for pre-identification processes, promoting clarity,
13 accessibility, and consistency across the church; and

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15 **WHEREAS**, the current process would benefit from greater clarity regarding the role and status
16 of a sitting bishop within the pre-identification and election process, ensuring transparency and
17 fairness for all candidates; and

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19 **WHEREAS**, the work of discernment in the church is inherently communal, grounded in the
20 promise that the Holy Spirit is active “where two or three are gathered,” and therefore should not
21 rest solely on individual initiative; and

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23 **WHEREAS**, providing multiple pathways for communal participation in pre-identification—
24 through congregations, conferences, and groups of the baptized—strengthens the church’s shared
25 responsibility in raising up leaders; therefore...

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27 **BE IT SO RESOLVED** that the Synod Assembly on May 30, 2026 amends continuing resolution
28 S9.04.C17, as provided below:

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30 **Note:** The specific day-count references in this document assume a Synod Assembly date of
31 June 1. Actual day counts may require adjustment in future elections based on the actual date of
32 the assembly.

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34 S9.04.C17. Although the ecclesiastical ballot, as described in †S9.04, is the method used to
35 elect the synod bishop, the synod sponsors a pre-identification process described in this
36 continuing resolution. The goal of this process is to provide the synod with opportunities for
37 discernment and prayerful consideration of the needs of the synod and the gifts of potential
38 leaders prior to the election.

- 39 . **Appointment of Bishop Election Committee:** By October 1 (or 244 days before the
40 Assembly), the Synod Council shall appoint a Bishop Election Committee to oversee and
41 facilitate the pre-identification process.
42 . **Appointment of the Synod Profile Team:** The Bishop Election Committee shall appoint
43 a Synod Study Team no later than October 10 (or 235 days before the Assembly) to draft
44 a synod profile and related discernment resources reflecting the current context,
45 challenges, and opportunities facing the synod. The Synod Profile Team shall complete
46 its work no later than December 10 (or 172 days before the assembly). The approved

47 profile and related study materials shall be distributed to the synod no later than
48 December 15 (or 167 days before the Assembly) to assist in synod-wide discernment.

49 . **Pre-Identification and Discernment Period:**

- 50 1. The pre-identification period shall open January 15 (or 136 days before the Assembly)
51 and close no later than March 15 (or 77 days before the Assembly).
 - 52 2. If there is a sitting bishop, that bishop must inform the Synod Council in writing of their
53 intent either to stand for re-election or not, no later than September 15 of the year
54 preceding the Synod Assembly (or 260 days before the Assembly). If the sitting bishop
55 does not declare their intent by that date, they shall still be eligible for election if they are
56 nominated on the first ballot of the ecclesiastical ballot. A sitting bishop's declaration of
57 intent to stand for re-election shall not preclude the pre-identification of other potential
58 nominees. If the sitting bishop has declared their intent to stand for re-election, they shall
59 be automatically considered a pre-identified candidate and do not require a
60 recommendation from another body.
 - 61 3. Other individuals may be pre-identified through formal action by one of the following
62 bodies within our synod: a congregation council, a congregation in its annual or specially
63 called meeting, or a conference assembly. Other individuals may also be pre-identified by
64 written nomination by at least three lay confirmed members of this synod and one
65 rostered minister of this synod; those individuals must include their congregation of
66 membership and contact information.
 - 67 4. Each pre-identifying body must submit official meeting minutes indicating the action to
68 pre-identify the individual to the Bishop Election Committee.
 - 69 5. To be accepted as a pre-identified candidate; individuals must consent to be considered
70 and provide to the bishop election committee by the deadline established by the
71 committee: a brief biography including a statement of vision for the synod, a standard
72 background check and the standard Minnesota background check for clergy for reports of
73 clergy misconduct, and responses to questions posed by the Bishop Election Committee.
 - 74 6. The names of pre-identified individuals will remain confidential (known only to the chair
75 of the Bishop Election Committee and designated synod staff member) until the Bishop
76 Election Committee shares the names and materials of pre-identified individuals with the
77 synod no later than April 2 (or 60 days before the Assembly) through the synod website
78 and electronic communications, and print or video materials as appropriate
 - 79 7. The Bishop Election Committee may organize one or more synod-wide or conference-
80 level events at which pre-identified candidates may be introduced to share their vision for
81 the synod. Any such events must conclude no later than 14 days prior to the start of the
82 Synod Assembly.
- 83 **d. Synod Assembly Responsibilities:** At the Synod Assembly, while the ecclesiastical
84 ballot remains the official method of election, the Bishop Election Committee shall
85 explain the pre-identification process to the assembly, introduce the pre-identified
86 candidate(s), and provide their submitted materials to voting members.
- 87 **d. Transparency and Integrity:** This process shall be carried out in a spirit of prayerful
88 discernment, transparency, and openness. The ecclesiastical ballot remains open to the
89 nomination of any ELCA rostered minister of Word and Sacrament who meets
90 constitutional eligibility, whether or not they have been pre-identified.

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