

## 2026 SYNOD CONVENTION — ELECTION OF:

- VOTING DELEGATES AND ALTERNATES

### (A) ELECTORAL CIRCUIT FORUM REQUIREMENTS TO ELECT VOTING DELEGATES/ALTERNATES

As a circuit visitor, you are responsible for the proper conduct of your circuit's electoral circuit forum (Bylaws 3.1.2) and for its use of proper procedure in the election of voting delegates and alternate delegates to the Synod's national convention (Bylaw 3.1.2.1). It will be important to pay special attention to the following requirements.

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#### CIRCUIT FORUM MEETING DEADLINE

Each electoral circuit forum (consisting of one visitation circuit or, if necessary, two or more adjacent circuits) must meet at your call as circuit visitor not later than nine (9) months prior to the opening date of the Synod convention (i.e., October 18, 2025, Bylaw 3.1.2.1 [a]). Failure to meet this absolute deadline will result in your circuit having no representation at the 2026 convention.

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#### ELECTRONIC MEETING REQUIREMENTS

An electoral circuit forum may *meet* via electronic means when an in-person meeting is burdensome, so long as the meeting is made available to all participants and opportunity is provided for an open and fair exchange of ideas and for secure, private, and confidential voting (see Bylaw 3.1.2.1[a–b]). This provision does require an *actual meeting* by electronic means and is not satisfied, for example, by an email vote without a meeting.

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#### NOTIFICATION TO CONGREGATIONS OF THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES

Well in advance of the electoral circuit forum, you should remind every congregation in your circuit of its need to:

- Determine which pastor and which layperson shall represent it at the forum (Bylaw 3.1.2.1 [c]). It is important to note that, in the case of multiple-congregation parishes, each parish sends one voting layperson and one called and installed pastor as voting representatives, together representing all the congregations of the parish. A congregation not contributing a lay voter may send an advisory lay representative, with voice but no vote.
- Should a *multi-congregation parish* involve *congregations having membership in different electoral circuits*, each lay representative, voting and advisory, shall attend the forum of that circuit of which the representative's congregation is a member. The pastoral delegate shall attend the forum of the circuit, within which he serves a congregation and within the district in which he holds membership, *to which he is assigned by his district president*. His eligibility for election as circuit delegate shall be within that circuit only. No multi-congregation parish is entitled to more than one pastoral and one lay voting representative because of its inclusion of congregations from different electoral circuits. (Bylaw 3.1.2.1 [d])

- Nominate one layperson (i.e., not a commissioned or ordained minister) from its own or one of the circuit's congregations to serve as the electoral circuit's lay delegate to the Synod convention. The name of the nominee must be submitted to you as circuit visitor *PRIOR* to the day of the forum. (Bylaw 3.1.2.1 [g])

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## VOTING DELEGATE ELIGIBILITY

Regarding pastors, each pastor who is called and installed to a congregation of the circuit in other than an assisting capacity and who is not a specific ministry (SMP) pastor (Constitution Article IX; Bylaws 2.5.6 and 2.13.1) is eligible to be elected as a pastoral delegate or alternate to the Synod convention (Bylaw 3.1.2.1 [h]). Regarding laypersons, only those laypersons, members of member congregations of the circuit, whose names were submitted prior to the day of the forum may be included on the slate of candidates for the lay delegate and alternate positions, since Bylaw 3.1.2.1 (g) does not allow for nominations at the meeting. Licensed lay deacons are laypersons and may serve as lay voting delegates and alternates. Commissioned ministers may not serve as lay or pastoral voting delegates or alternates.

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## CIRCUIT FORUM ELECTION PROCESS

You must follow the election process outlined in Bylaw 3.1.2.1 (f–j). It will be helpful if you read the provisions of Bylaw 3.1.2.1 at the meeting to make attendees aware of proper procedure. Attendance at the 2025 district convention is not a requirement to serve as a Synod convention delegate or alternate. Have on hand an ample supply of blank pieces of paper to serve as ballots or make adequate provision for an electronic means of voting that fulfills the requirements of Bylaw 3.1.2.1 (b).

It is important to note that 2023 Resolution 9-05A changed the process for delegate election, allowing circuits to decide prior to initiating the election process whether they wished to begin the elections of the delegates and then of the alternates with either the pastoral or the lay slot. (Formerly, circuits were to begin with the pastoral slots, even though the lay names in nomination are typically much more limited.) Each election shall be by majority vote.

- During the election process, it will be important to bear in mind that when a congregation supplies a pastoral delegate or alternate, no congregation served by him (in other than an assisting capacity [Bylaw 2.5.6]) can supply another delegate or alternate, pastoral or lay (Bylaw 3.1.2.1 [h][2]).
- Likewise, when a congregation supplies a lay delegate or alternate, that congregation's other lay members and any pastors serving it (again, in other than an assisting capacity) are excluded from election as delegate or alternate (Bylaw 3.1.2.1 [g][2]).

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## INFORMATION TO COLLECT AND PRIVACY NOTICE

Make sure you collect, for each voting delegate and alternate, pastor and lay:

- Full name
- Residential address and a mailing address, if it differs
- Cell phone
- Email
- Congregation name, city, state, ZIP

2019 Resolution 9-04A removed the printing of delegate addresses from the *Convention Workbook*. When collecting their personal information for submission, inform delegates and alternates that their mailing addresses will no longer be published in the *Workbook*, but will still be important for official convention business mailings and will be required on registration forms. The email address provided by the delegate will be used only for official, convention-related business. **Personal information gathered for the purpose of convention registration is not to be used or disseminated for any purpose other than official convention business, even by the district.**

## (B) ELECTORAL CIRCUIT ELECTIONS REPORT

As a circuit visitor responsible for reporting the results of your electoral circuit's voting delegate and alternate elections, you must use the electronic form provided to you. If you are unable to access this form, please contact [lcmssecretary@lcms.org](mailto:lcmssecretary@lcms.org).

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### ELECTION RESULTS SUBMISSION

*Immediately* following the forum, election results must be reported to the LCMS Office of the Secretary using **FORM I—Official Registration—Voting Delegates and Alternates**. A link to this form will be emailed to you or you can access your assigned form by logging into the LCMS Forms system. **FORM I—Official Registration—Voting Delegates and Alternates** must be filled out *completely*, providing *all* requested information, taking particular care to spell delegate and alternate delegate names correctly and to provide accurate address and email information, since this information will be used extensively prior to and following the convention.

Instructions for logging into the LCMS Forms system using the email address to which this email was sent can be found by clicking this link: [Instructions for Email Login](#). Once logged in you will see a **Dashboard** and any forms that have been assigned to you.

Please note that in combined electoral circuits, each circuit visitor will receive **FORM I—Official Registration—Voting Delegates and Alternates**. The form has a way to indicate that *another* responsible circuit visitor is submitting the results of the election. Each circuit visitor involved should return the form, but only one is required to submit the election results. **Please determine which circuit visitor will be responsible for submitting the report and communicating with the district secretary.**

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### DISTRICT SECRETARY CERTIFICATION

Once submitted, the election results will be sent to your district secretary for his review and certification (Bylaw 3.1.3.2). Your district secretary will be informed of the selections and will certify the results electronically (or contact you with any issues). This is a change from previous conventions, intended to speed the registration process and to detect any invalid elections more quickly, hopefully allowing circuits to take corrective action before relevant deadlines. **If you need assistance with form submission, please contact [lcmssecretary@lcms.org](mailto:lcmssecretary@lcms.org).**

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## ELECTION ERROR CORRECTIONS

If an error is made by a circuit forum or if the forum fails to elect a delegate or alternate, the forum can meet again a second time to correct its error or to elect the vacant roles, so long as there is sufficient time to do so prior to the October 18, 2025, deadline for circuit forum delegate elections.

If a second meeting occurs, the results of the forum must be submitted immediately using the LCMS Forms system. The circuit visitor responsible for reporting the election results must make a copy of the form previously submitted, update the information on the form to reflect the new election results, and then submit the updated form.

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## VOTING DELEGATE VACANCY (ALTERNATE AVAILABLE)

In the event that a vacancy occurs in one of the voting delegate positions prior to the Synod convention, you must first verify that the elected alternate delegate continues to be available to serve and then *inform your district secretary* of the needed change of registration. The district secretary will submit the proper form to the Synod.

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## VOTING DELEGATE VACANCY (ALTERNATE NOT AVAILABLE)

In the event that a vacancy occurs in a voting delegate position and the duly elected alternate also is no longer available to attend the Synod convention, you must *inform your district secretary*, who will in turn inform your district president of his need to fill the vacancy by appointment — in consultation with you as circuit visitor (Bylaw 3.1.2.1 [m]). Your district secretary will then inform the Synod of this change.

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## VOTING DELEGATE VACANCY (NO ALTERNATE ELECTED)

Reminder: In the event that a vacancy occurs in a voting delegate position and your circuit failed to elect an alternate at the circuit forum, your circuit will not be able to send a delegate to the Synod convention, since an appointment by a district president is possible only when an electoral circuit has filled both its delegate and alternate positions via circuit forum elections. In such case, you as circuit visitor must *inform your district secretary*, who will report to the Synod your elected delegate's inability to serve.

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## VOTING DELEGATE ADDRESS/CONTACT INFO CHANGES

In the event there is an address change for an elected delegate from your circuit, as circuit visitor you must *inform your district secretary*, who in turn will report the change of address to the Synod.

## (C) IMPORTANT DEADLINE REMINDERS FOR CIRCUIT VISITORS

IMPORTANT DEADLINES TO REMEMBER:	
One Day Prior to Circuit Forum	<b>DEADLINE FOR LAY DELEGATE NOMINEES:</b> Names of nominees must be provided by congregations to you as circuit visitor at least one day prior to the day of the electoral circuit forum.
October 18, 2025	<b>ELECTORAL CIRCUIT MEETING DEADLINE:</b> You must hold your circuit forum for the election of delegates to the Synod convention on or before this date. You should report results <b>immediately</b> following the meeting using <a href="#"><u>FORM I—Official Registration—Voting Delegates and Alternates</u></a> .
October 25, 2025	<b>VOTING DELEGATE/ALTERNATE REGISTRATION DEADLINE:</b> By this date, your district secretary must have certified to the Secretary of the Synod the names and addresses of voting delegates and alternates, pastoral and lay, submitted by you electronically using <a href="#"><u>FORM I—Official Registration—Voting Delegates and Alternates</u></a> .

Thank you for the support for this certification process that you will be able to provide in your district.