



## Recommendation: The Election of the Presiding Bishop

### Process for Election

The process for election of the presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is governed by the applicable bylaws and the Rules of Organization and Procedure as adopted by the Churchwide Assembly.

The effect of the ballot on which an election takes place is the following action:

**To elect \_\_\_\_\_ to a six-year term, commencing November 1, 2019, as  
presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.**

Bylaw **19.01.02.** specifies the process for nomination and election of the presiding bishop, as follows:

The presiding bishop shall be elected by the Churchwide Assembly by ecclesiastical ballot. Three-fourths of the votes cast shall be necessary for election on the first ballot. If no one is elected, the first ballot shall be considered the nominating ballot. Three-fourths of the votes cast on the second ballot shall be necessary for election. The third ballot shall be limited to the seven persons (plus ties) who received the greatest number of votes on the second ballot, and two-thirds of the votes cast shall be necessary for election. The fourth ballot shall be limited to the three persons (plus ties) who receive the greatest number of votes on the third ballot, and 60 percent of the votes cast shall be necessary for election. On subsequent ballots, a majority of the votes cast shall be necessary for election. These ballots shall be limited to the two persons (plus ties) who receive the greatest number of votes on the previous ballot.

### Duties and Responsibilities

The duties and responsibilities of the presiding bishop, as specified in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, are diverse and numerous:

- 10.81. The Conference of Bishops shall be composed of the bishops of the synods, the presiding bishop of this church, and the secretary of this church.**
- 11.33. Leadership of this church shall be vested in the churchwide officers, the Churchwide Assembly, the Church Council, the Conference of Bishops, and executive directors of churchwide units. The full-time officers shall be the presiding bishop, secretary, and treasurer. . . .**
- 13.21. The presiding bishop shall be a minister of Word and Sacrament of this church who, as its pastor, shall be a teacher of the faith of this church and shall provide leadership for the life and witness of this church. The presiding bishop shall:**
  - a. Be the president and chief executive officer of the corporation, overseeing the work of the churchwide organization.**
  - b. Be the chief ecumenical officer of this church and its primary representative in the national and international interchurch agencies in which this church holds membership.**
  - c. Provide for the preparation of the agenda for the Churchwide Assembly, Church Council, Executive Committee, and Conference of Bishops, and preside at the Churchwide Assembly.**
  - d. Provide leadership and care for the bishops of the synods.**
  - e. Supervise the work of the other officers.**
  - f. Provide for the preparation of the budget for the churchwide organization.**
  - g. Nominate and direct the work of the executive for administration.**
  - h. Coordinate and supervise the work of executives of churchwide units.**
  - i. Appoint members of all churchwide committees for which election procedures are not provided.**

- j. Be responsible for the chaplaincies of this church in federal agencies, institutions, and armed forces and provide for the pastoral care of those called to these ministries.
  - k. Serve as an advisory member, with voice but not vote, on all committees of this church and all boards or committees of churchwide units, or designate a person to serve as the presiding bishop's representative.
- 13.22.** The presiding bishop shall be elected by the Churchwide Assembly to a six-year term and serve until a successor takes office.
- 13.22.01.** The presiding bishop shall be elected as provided in Chapter 19 and shall take office on the first day of the third month after election.
- 13.22.02.** The presiding bishop shall be a full-time, salaried position.
- 14.21.05.** The Church Council, upon recommendation of the presiding bishop, shall submit budget proposals for approval by the Churchwide Assembly and authorize expenditures within the parameters of approved budgets.
- 15.11.02.** *Administrative Team.* The presiding bishop, secretary, treasurer, and executive for administration, along with the executive directors of the churchwide units, shall function as an administrative team, directed by the presiding bishop. This administrative team shall assist the presiding bishop in providing leadership, planning, oversight, management, supervision, and coordination in the operation of the churchwide organization.
- 15.12.B13.c.** *Ecumenical representatives shall be chosen by the presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in consultation with the Executive Committee of the Church Council. These representatives include members of delegations to national and international inter-church entities in which this church holds membership and members of inter-Lutheran, inter-faith, and ecumenical discussions, including bilateral dialogues and conversations, in which this church participates. All such appointments shall be reported to the Church Council as information.*
- 15.12.G16.** *Responsibility for Theological Discernment*  
*Responsibility shall be exercised in the Office of the Presiding Bishop for serving the Church's theological work by promoting, coordinating, and facilitating theological discernment of the Church's message and its theological foundations in collaboration with all who share in the responsibilities to be teachers of the faith in the Church, including the Conference of Bishops, the seminary faculties, the convocation of teaching theologians, networks such as Lutheran ethicists and women theologians, the editorial staff of the ELCA publishing ministry and publications, and all rostered ministers. This responsibility for serving the Church's theological work also shall encompass theological work in and commitment to discern, understand, and respond to racism, classism, and sexism and issues of justice for women in the Church and in society in order to advance full participation, equal opportunity, and justice for all. To fulfill these responsibilities, the presiding bishop shall appoint an assistant to the presiding bishop/executive for theological discernment, who will assist the presiding bishop and coordinate the service of staff groups that provide theological resources and assistance in programmatic implementation.*

Other constitutional provisions, bylaws and continuing resolutions related to the role and responsibilities of the presiding bishop also apply. Those cited (above) provide the general overview of the office. See also Section II of the *Pre-Assembly Report* for the Report of the Presiding Bishop.