

Ecclesiastical Ballot for Vice President

There will be a churchwide officer election for vice president at the 2016 Churchwide Assembly by using the “ecclesiastical ballot.”

It is important to emphasize that this is not just an election; it also is a call process. As such, we pray that the Holy Spirit will be among us as individuals and within this whole church, as we engage in discernment regarding the election of the vice president. Individual and group reflection, discussion, and prayerful consideration are all important parts of the discernment process – both for individuals who may become nominees and for all members of this church, as we reflect on its needs and the attributes desired of our leaders.

This process has been used for the election of all churchwide officers since the inception of the ELCA. Most synods also use the ecclesiastical ballot process for electing synod bishops.

The ecclesiastical ballot process is described in Chapter 19 of the *ELCA Constitution*. The applicable provisions also can be found in the *Rules of Organization and Procedure for the 2016 Churchwide Assembly*. Elections of officers are addressed in Part 16 of the rules and will be adopted by the assembly as one of the first matters of business in plenary session one.

Here is how the ecclesiastical ballot process will work at the Churchwide Assembly:

Earlier this year, several voting members of the Churchwide Assembly identified lay people who may have the appropriate gifts to be the ELCA Vice President (ELCA Constitution 19.31.B15.). Some of those people have filled out biographical information and that information will be available for your review. You will find those biographical information forms on ELCA Guidebook under the section “Biographical Information for VP”. These forms will be removed prior to the ecclesiastical ballot process begins in plenary session one. The ecclesiastical ballot process allows for voting members to write in the name of any layperson that is a member of an ELCA congregation to be on the first ballot.

On Monday evening, August 8, in plenary session one, the first ballot for vice president will take place. Before the balloting, the process will be explained, questions answered, and the assembly will pray, asking the Holy Spirit to be present and inform the assembly’s decision. Prayer will take place before every ballot! After prayer, ballots will be distributed to voting members, and voting will take place.

On the first ballot for vice president, voting members may write in the name of any layperson who is a voting member of a congregation of this church. The ballots will be collected and counted by the Elections Committee, and the results of the ballot will be reported to the assembly. There will be an election if a nominee receives 75 percent or more of the ballots cast. If there is not an election, the first ballot is considered a nominating ballot.

After the first ballot, any person nominated may withdraw her or his name before the established deadline. The second ballot for vice president will contain the names of all individuals nominated who did not withdraw. On the second ballot, if any nominee receives 75 percent or

more of the votes cast, he or she will be elected. If there is not an election, the seven individuals (plus ties) who received the most votes on the second ballot will appear on the third ballot. This and all subsequent ballots will be conducted using electronic voting machines.

Before the third ballot, voting members will receive biographical information regarding the nominees. On the third ballot, two-thirds of the votes cast are necessary for election. If there is not an election, a fourth ballot will take place. It will contain the names of the three individuals (plus ties) who received the greatest number of votes on the third ballot. On the fourth ballot, 60 percent of votes cast are necessary for election. If there is not an election, subsequent ballots will contain the names of two individuals (plus ties), and a majority of votes cast is necessary for election.

Remember that an election can take place on any ballot if a nominee obtains the required percentage.

Description of Position for Office of Vice President

Below is a brief description of the non-salaried position of vice president.

Under the governing documents of this church, the vice president serves as chair of the Church Council, and, in the event the presiding bishop is unable to do so, as chair of the Churchwide Assembly. The vice president serves under the presiding bishop of this church, providing leadership as specified in provision 11.33. of this church's constitution. The vice president is elected to a six-year term by the Churchwide Assembly. Nominees for vice president must be a voting member of a congregation of this church.

After the second ballot, all nominees will need to complete a biographical information form; a disclosure form; and a background check disclosure and release information form. The biographical information form will be used to distribute information about the nominees to the voting members. The other disclosure forms are strictly confidential. **[Click here](#)** for the Protocol for Background Checks on Churchwide Officer elections.