



North American Lutheran Church
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February 24, 2023

Dear Fellow Members and Congregations of the North American Lutheran Church,

Greetings in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ. At our 2023 Biennial Mission Convocation in Oklahoma City, NALC delegates will elect a Bishop. In preparation for this important election, the Executive Council is providing congregations and potential Mission Convocation delegates with a packet of informative materials. **Included in this packet are:**

- A handout stressing the importance of strong lay participation at all NALC Mission Convocations;
- Descriptions of positions in need of nominations;
- The portions of the NALC Constitution governing Mission Convocation delegations (including mandated proportions of lay and clergy delegates), governing elections, and defining the ministry of the Bishop;
- Recommendations—approved by the Executive Council—from the 2015-2017 Task Force that studied the NALC's procedures for electing its Bishop;
- Biographical information nominees or congregations are to provide for the Convocation;
- A booklet of prayers, hymn suggestions and Scripture readings to use in the coming months to prepare for the election of our Bishop.

Please visit thenalc.org/nominations for more information and to submit nominations. The deadline is **MAY 1, 2023**.

If you have questions, please email nominations@thenalc.org. May the Lord guide you as you pray, discern, and discuss how your congregation and delegates will be involved in the election of a Bishop of the NALC.

Peace and blessings,

The Executive Council & The 2023 Nominating Committee

North American Lutheran Church

LAY PARTICIPATION NEEDED AT THE NALC BIENNIAL MISSION CONVOCATION

From its birth, the North American Lutheran Church has committed itself, as one of its four Core Values, to be congregationally focused. For the NALC to grow and prosper, our congregations and their leaders need to stress the importance of participation in the NALC's Mission Convocations, and include in their budgets enough money for both laity and clergy to attend and vote. In doing so, we have the opportunity to be part of a truly 1st Century church body!

Our NALC Constitution (7.02) requires at least 50% of the delegates with voting privileges at Mission Convocations be laity. We are blessed that many clergy realize the importance of attending the Annual Convocation. But year after year, there have been less than an equal number of lay delegates in attendance, which is leading to a growing imbalance in representation. This imbalance is a failure to uphold the mandates of the Constitution and has other ramifications as well. Help us remain congregationally focused by encouraging lay people to vote in this important election and to participate in the work of the greater Church.

Other benefits of attending the Mission Convocation for laity include:

- Becoming aware of the ministries, programs, people, and resources available to help your congregations at home.
- Hearing what's happening in discipleship across the continent and around the world.
- Learning about our leaders' vision for our church.
- Gaining ideas and specific ways your congregation can bring Christ's message to your communities and work with other NALC congregations.
- Voting on other matters of the greater Church.
- Connect with global and domestic mission partners.
- Attending workshops and presentations.
- Meeting like-minded people from across the United States, Canada, and other countries, and making vital contacts.
- Being inspired by worship, speakers and fellow participants as we all seek to be faithful followers of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We ask that you prayerfully discern the importance of your congregation being represented at our Mission Convocation. By attending you will strengthen your own ministries and help to make the election of a Bishop a widely shared decision of both lay persons and clergy across our entire Church body.

DESCRIPTIONS OF POSITIONS SEEKING NOMINATIONS

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL: two positions (one clergy, one lay); 4-year term

The Executive Council functions as the board of directors for the NALC, providing leadership for the church between the biennial Convocations. The Executive Council consists of the bishop, four clergy and four lay members who are elected for four-year terms. Terms begin on October 1 in the year elected and end on September 30, four years later. The council meets quarterly, usually in January, April or May, July and October. The meetings occur on a weekday and do require some time away from one's day job. These in-person meetings require two days and they are held at various locations. Participation in the biennial Convocation is also expected, which is another three to four days away from home and work.

COURT OF ADJUDICATION: two positions (clergy or lay); 4-year term

The Court of Adjudication hears appeals from disciplinary decisions; resolves questions of interpretation of NALC governing documents; and decides claims that a person or entity has violated these governing documents. The Court of Adjudication consists of seven members, each elected to a four-year term by the biennial Convocation. Terms begin on October 1 in the year elected and end on September 30, four years later. Any member of an NALC congregation shall be eligible for election and service. Usually, the court is able to meet online or via a conference call, but an occasional face-to-face meeting may be needed.

BISHOP: one position (clergy); 4-year term

Below are portions of the NALC Constitution governing Convocation delegations, including mandated proportions of lay and clergy delegates; governing elections; and defining the ministry of a Bishop.

ARTICLE 7 – BIENNIAL CONVOCATION

1. A Convocation of the NALC shall be held biennially.
2. Delegates with voting privileges at a Convocation shall be the ordained ministers of the NALC and at least an equal number of laypersons. Each congregation of the NALC shall elect one lay delegate to the Convocation for every 750 baptized members, or fraction thereof, of such congregation. For purposes of determining the number of lay delegates that a congregation may elect, associate members (those holding primary membership in another congregation) shall not be counted. In the event that the total number of lay delegates elected pursuant to the preceding sentence is less than the total number of ordained ministers, the Executive Council shall apportion additional lay delegates based on the relative size of the congregations of the NALC. To the extent appropriate to maintain good order, and subject to any action by the Convocation, the Executive Council may adopt procedures relating to the timing of delegate selection and to verifying the credentials of all delegates.
3. All members of the Convocation are delegates and as such represent their congregations.

4. The responsibilities of the biennial Convocation shall include: election of the Bishop, the Executive Council, and any other position requiring election; adoption of a budget for the subsequent calendar year; consideration of teaching statements; reception of reports; and other items of business as may be determined by the Executive Council or by the Convocation.

ARTICLE 8 – BISHOP

1. The Bishop shall be an ordained minister who is a member of the NALC. The Bishop shall serve as the chief pastor and chief evangelist of the NALC, responsible for ensuring the priority of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:16-20) in the life of the church.
2. The Bishop shall carry out a pastoral ministry within the church, serving as pastor for the ordained ministers and congregations of the NALC. The Bishop shall preach the Gospel, forgive sins, administer the Sacraments, and judge doctrine. (Augsburg Confession XXVIII) The Bishop shall carry out a ministry of visitation throughout the church, will be a defender of the faith, and will promote the mission of the church. The Bishop shall be the chief ecumenical officer of the NALC.
3. The Bishop will, with the concurrence of the Executive Council, authorize all ordinations to the ministry of Word and Sacrament. The Bishop will normally conduct the rite of ordination. A candidate for the ministry may submit a request to the Bishop to appoint a particular ordained minister to preside at the ordination on behalf of the church, which shall be approved absent extraordinary circumstances.
4. The Bishop shall be the chief executive officer of the NALC, and will serve in a collegial manner with other leaders of the NALC. The Bishop shall have both voice and vote ex officio in all committees, task forces, and similar bodies of the NALC.
5. The Convocation shall elect the Bishop from a ballot consisting of candidates identified by the Nominating Committee and any candidates nominated from the floor. The Nominating Committee shall include on the ballot all candidates who (a) have been nominated by an NALC congregation or by the Executive Council; (b) have agreed to serve if elected; and (c) have provided the information requested from all candidates by the Nominating Committee. Any Convocation delegate may nominate an additional candidate, whose name shall be added to the ballot if (a) the candidate agrees to serve if elected; and (b) the candidate provides the information provided by other candidates to the Nominating Committee. Information on all candidates other than those nominated from the floor shall be provided to the members of the NALC no later than 90 days prior to a Convocation that will elect a Bishop.
6. On any ballot for Bishop, any candidate who receives a majority of the votes cast shall be elected. If no candidate receives a majority on the first ballot, all but the top four candidates by votes received, including ties, shall be eliminated. Thereafter, if no candidate receives a majority, the candidate receiving the fewest votes, plus ties, shall be eliminated until two candidates remain. When two candidates remain, voting shall continue until one candidate receives a majority.

TASK FORCE STUDYING THE NALC'S PROCEDURE FOR ELECTING A BISHOP

Recommendations approved by the Executive Council, January 25, 2017. Revised January 25, 2023.

1. We recommend that candidates for election to the office of Bishop address the Convocation by spoken word, including giving responses to questions. If there are more than four candidates on the ballot, such speaking should commence after the number of candidates has been reduced to four as provided by Article 8, Section 8.06 of the NALC Constitution.
2. We recommend that a set of instructions be provided by the Bishop and/or the General Secretary to the Nominating Committee and the Elections Committee. In addition to many other important matters, these instructions should include:
 - a. that the Nominating Committee urge pastors to be open to the encouragement of those who approach them as possible candidates for the office of Bishop, prayerfully considering whether God is calling them;
 - b. that the Nominating Committee encourage those pastors who aspire to the office of Bishop to make their aspirations known to their congregations or to the Executive Council;
 - c. that the Nominating Committee encourage NALC congregations, at all worship services during the year prior to the election of a Bishop, to pray that God would make known to us the one He has chosen for this ministry; and encourage the people of the NALC to offer similar prayers in their private devotions as well;
 - d. that the Nominating Committee, before including candidates for the office of Bishop on the ballot, verify that they are ordained ministers of the NALC in good standing;
 - e. that the Elections Committee counsel the Convocation to a spirit of solemnity throughout all elections;
 - f. that the Elections Committee discourage applause or other demonstrations when election results are announced;
 - g. that the Elections Committee urge strict adherence to the Convocation agenda's published times for balloting.
3. We recommend that the Convocation agenda, in years when a Bishop is to be elected, maximize the time devoted to the election process, and therefore reduce the amount of time devoted to other business. We also recommend that Convocations in years when a Bishop is to be elected be a half day longer than in other years.
4. We recommend, when an incumbent Bishop is a candidate for re-election, that the General Secretary preside over the Convocation during the election for Bishop.