

February 20, 2006

INFORMATION FOR: Synods with elections of bishops
PROVIDED BY: Pr. Lowell G. Almen, secretary
SUBJECT: Rules of procedures related to ecclesiastical ballot and related matters

DEFINITION OF "ECCLESIASTICAL BALLOT"

In response to requests from synods for a definition of the ecclesiastical ballot and guidance on the use of such a ballot, the Church Council adopted the following definition in 1994:

To define an "ecclesiastical ballot" for the election of a bishop in synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as an election process:

1. In which on the first ballot the name of any eligible individual may be submitted for nomination by a voting member of the assembly;
2. Through which the possibility of election to office exists on any ballot by achievement of the required number of votes cast by voting members of the assembly applicable to a particular ballot.
3. That precludes spoken floor nominations;
4. In which the first ballot is the nominating ballot if no election occurs on the first ballot;
5. In which the first ballot defines the total slate of nominees for possible election on a subsequent ballot, with no additional nominations permitted;
6. That does not preclude, after the reporting of the first ballot, the right of persons nominated to withdraw their names prior to the casting of the second ballot;
7. In which any name appearing on the second ballot may not be subsequently withdrawn;
8. That does not preclude an assembly's adoption of rules that permit, at a defined point in the election process and for a defined period of time, speeches to the assembly by nominees or their representatives, and/or a question-and-answer forum in which the nominees or their representatives participate; and
9. In which the number of names that appear on any ballot subsequent to the second ballot shall be determined in accordance with provisions of the governing documents (or, if the governing documents are silent, in accordance with rules adopted by the assembly).

This definition (above) specifically is relevant for those synods in which the ecclesiastical ballot is used for the nomination and election of 'the synodical bishop.