

ENGLISH DISTRICT

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THE LUTHERAN CHURCH

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OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

September 26, 2024

Pastors and Presidents of English District Congregations:

Greetings to you in the Name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

The English District will meet in Convention next summer: **June 26–28, 2025 at Concordia University—Ann Arbor, MI.** Synod Bylaw 4.2.1 states the purpose of this meeting of representatives from District congregations: *“Conventions of the districts shall afford opportunities for worship, nurture, inspiration, fellowship, and the communication of vital information. They are the principal legislative assemblies, which amend the district’s Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws, consider and take action on reports and overtures, and handle appropriate appeals.”*

Your congregation with its pastors and members plays several important roles in the District Convention process. This letter is meant to inform you about those roles and prepare you to fulfill them.

CIRCUIT FORUMS & ELECTION OF CIRCUIT VISITORS

Within the next five months, your Circuit Visitor will convene a Circuit Forum, a gathering of pastoral and lay representatives from each congregation of a Visitation Circuit. Synod Bylaw 5.3.1 outlines the various purposes of Circuit Forums. At this point in the triennium, the Circuit Forum convenes primarily to fulfill two responsibilities related to the upcoming District Convention:

- (1) To elect a Circuit Visitor (*Synod Bylaw 5.3.3*).
- (2) To submit overtures to the District Convention (*Synod Bylaw 5.3.5*).

Your congregation has the right to designate one pastoral and one lay representative for the Circuit Forum. Unless your congregation has another official way to do this, the Voters Assembly is to designate these individuals. The process a congregation uses to do so is left to its discretion. A form to record whom your congregation designates to represent it at the Circuit Forum is attached. Complete and submit it **to your Circuit Visitor**. It would be helpful to have that done at least two weeks prior to the Circuit Forum.

Synod Bylaw 5.2.2(b) establishes the nomination process used to elect a Circuit Visitor: *“Prior to the day of the circuit forum, nominations for candidates for the office of circuit visitor may be submitted by a voting congregation of the circuit and suggested by the district president, in consultation with the praesidium of the district. Names suggested by the district president may, during the circuit forum, be received into nomination by a majority vote of the assembly.”* This right can be exercised by your congregation. A nomination form is attached that can be completed and sent **to your Circuit Visitor**.

If your congregation chooses to submit overtures for consideration by the Circuit Forum, those should be sent **to your Circuit Visitor**, so that he can distribute them to the representatives from the other congregations of the Circuit. A form to properly craft overtures is available from the District Convention webpage: <https://englishdistrict.org/events/english-district-convention>. Similar to designation of representatives, it would be helpful to have any overtures submitted to the Circuit Visitor at least two weeks prior to the Circuit Forum.

Circuits have the option of holding their Circuit Forums by means of electronic meetings technology, as long as they meet the requirements established by Synod Bylaws 5.2.2(a) and 5.2.2(c):

(a) Circuit forums shall meet at the call of their circuit visitors to select their circuit visitors no later than the time established by the district. When in-person meetings are burdensome (e.g., geographically large circuits), a circuit may select another manner of meeting (e.g., e-meeting technologies) that is suitable and made available to all participants, taking into consideration the need to provide for an open and fair exchange of ideas and secure, private, and confidential voting.

(c) Each circuit may adopt procedures and methods that will insure efficiency and accuracy, including the use of mechanical, electronic, or other methods of casting, recording, or tabulating votes. The privilege of voting shall be exercised by the representatives from each member congregation of the circuit, who shall have been selected in the manner prescribed by the congregation (Bylaw 5.3.2).

Pastors and Chairpersons of congregations should discuss with their Circuit Visitor their preferred manner of holding a Circuit Forum. If a Circuit Forum meets electronically, careful attention would need to be paid to advance submission and subsequent effective dissemination of information about nominees for Circuit Visitor elections and/or overtures to be considered.

The **deadline** for convening a Circuit Forum is **February 26, 2025**.

ELECTION & ACCREDITATION OF CONVENTION DELEGATES

Your congregation has the right to send one pastoral delegate and one lay delegate to the District Convention. Both pastoral and lay delegates are to be elected by your congregation's Voters Assembly. An alternate lay delegate should also be elected. Associate Pastors and Assistant Pastors are eligible to serve as a congregation's pastoral delegate, if the congregation chooses to elect them. Commissioned Ministers are **ineligible** to serve as a congregation's pastoral or lay delegate.

A form to accredit the delegates whom your congregation elects is attached. This form can be completed and returned to the District office or presented to the District Secretary at the District Convention. To assist the District staff with convention planning, including accurate housing and meal needs, please return the form **to the District office** by **February 26, 2025**. Separate registration forms for convention lodging and meals will be sent to accredited delegates in March 2025.

DISTRICT REGIONS FOR 2025–2028 TRIENNIUM

Our District has been divided into regions for purposes of conferences and elections requiring regional representation, as outlined in District Bylaw 3.3:

For purposes of conferences and elections requiring regional representation, the District shall be divided into four regions: Eastern, Lake Erie, Midwestern, and Western:

- (a) The President and Vice-Presidents of the District and the Board of Directors acting jointly shall determine the membership of the four regions 24 months prior to Conventions of the District.*
- (b) For purposes of regional elections, individuals must meet the regional eligibility requirements outlined within Synod Bylaw Section 4.3.*

Synod Bylaw 4.3.1 establishes the requirements for membership within the District and District Regions in order to be eligible for election:

A president shall be elected from the clergy roster of the Synod by each district. Two or more vice-presidents, a secretary, and a circuit visitor for each circuit established by the district shall be elected from the clergy roster of the district. In the case of regional selections, nominees shall be from the clergy roster of the district with membership in a congregation in the designated region. (This shall also be the case for all other regional selections.)

Synod Bylaw 4.3.3 establishes the requirements for membership within the District and District Regions in order to be eligible to hold office:

All officers and members of boards shall be members of member congregations of the district and, when appropriate, be members of congregations of designated regions during the course of their tenure.

In May 2023, the District Regions for the 2025–2028 triennium were established by the President and Vice-Presidents and the Board of Directors, as required by District Bylaw 3.3. The four regions are listed below:

EASTERN REGION

- Circuit 1 [New York/New Jersey]
- Circuit 2 [Philadelphia]
- Circuit 3 [Florida]
- Circuit 4 [Georgia]
- Circuit 5 [Buffalo]
- Circuit 6 [Pittsburgh]

LAKE ERIE REGION

- Circuit 7 [Canada—East]
- Circuit 8 [Canada—West]
- Circuit 9 [Cleveland/Akron]
- Circuit 10 [Cleveland—West]
- Circuit 11 [Detroit—South]
- Circuit 12 [Detroit—North]
- Circuit 13 [Western Michigan]
- Circuit 14 [Indiana]

MIDWESTERN REGION

- Circuit 15 [Chicago—North]
- Circuit 16 [Chicago—South]
- Circuit 17 [Milwaukee]
- Circuit 18 [Saint Louis]

WESTERN REGION

- Circuit 19 [Arizona—North]
- Circuit 20 [Arizona—South]
- Circuit 21 [Nevada/Utah]
- Circuit 22 [San Diego]
- Circuit 23 [Los Angeles]
- Circuit 24 [San Francisco]

NOMINATIONS FOR DISTRICT PRESIDENT AND VICE-PRESIDENTS

Congregations may nominate candidates for the office of District President and Vice-President. Nominations shall be made by your congregation's Voters Assembly. Your congregation will receive nominating ballots for these offices in December.

The five ordained ministers of the Synod who receive the highest number of nominating votes and consent to serve shall form the slate of candidates for District President; the three ordained ministers of the District residing within the boundaries of each region who receive the most nominating votes and consent to serve shall form the slate of candidates for Vice-President. Nominating ballots must be *received by the District Secretary* by **February 26, 2025**.

NOMINATIONS FOR OTHER DISTRICT OFFICES

The nominating process for all other elected positions within the District involves a Committee on Nominations developing a slate of candidates to present to the Convention. To facilitate the Committee's work, nominations for these positions can be submitted by ordained ministers and commissioned ministers of the District, lay members of District congregations, or District congregations.

A nomination form is attached. This form will also be available via the District website: <https://englishdistrict.org/events/english-district-convention>. The work of the Committee on Nominations is greatly helped when it receives nominations from across the District. Please consider nominating individuals, especially those from your congregation or Circuit, who may have abilities for service. Nomination forms for these offices must be *received by the District office* by **February 26, 2025**.

SUBMITTING OVERTURES TO THE CONVENTION

Congregations, Circuit Forums, and plenary or regional District Church Worker Conferences may adopt overtures for consideration by the District Convention. A form to properly craft overtures is available at the District website: <https://englishdistrict.org/events/english-district-convention>. Overtures must be *received by the District President* by **February 26, 2025**.

I look forward to working with you to complete this triennium's convention cycle. Should you have any questions, please ask them by email (englishdistrictsecretary@gmail.com) or by telephone (717-636-1545). District staff may also be able to answer your questions (248-476-0039).

Christ's peace and blessings be with you and your congregation!

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Luke T. Zimmerman" with a small cross symbol at the end of the line.

Rev. Luke T. Zimmerman
Secretary, LCMS English District