

Guidance to Nominating Committee for the 2021 Elections Cycle

**PROPOSAL:** Approve and provide the following guidelines to the Nominating Committee for its use in planning for the elections to take place at the 2021 Synod Assembly:

1. The Nominating Committee is requested to recruit potential nominees (male or female) for the position of **Synod Secretary** for a four-year term. Because the Synod Council is the nominating body for these positions, all biographical forms received for these positions should be forwarded to the Synod Council, without additional action by the Nominating Committee. The secretary shall be elected by the Synod Assembly and be a voting member of a congregation of this synod. The secretary may be either a lay person or a rostered minister. The secretary shall not receive a salary for the performance of the duties of the office. Responsibilities of the secretary include keeping and distributing the minutes of all meetings of the Synod Assembly, and Synod Council. The secretary shall also have responsibility for reviewing the synod constitution. See Synod Constitution S.8.30 for additional responsibilities. NOTE: All nominees for Vice President will be asked to present a short (5 minutes or less) speech during the 2021 Synod Assembly. Note also that the synod constitution requires a criminal background check for all officers. The current Synod Secretary, Rev. Randy Jones, is eligible for re-election.
  
2. The Nominating Committee is requested to recruit potential lay nominees for two **at-large positions on the Synod Council**. Because the Synod Council is the nominating body for these positions, all biographical forms received for these positions should be forwarded to the Synod Council, without additional action by the Nominating Committee. Current at-large members Rev. Mica Koli and Ms. Elaine Schwartz are eligible for re-election.
  
3. The Nominating Committee should nominate at least two but no more than four persons for each of the following positions to be elected at the 2020 Synod Assembly:
  - 3 rostered members (male or female) of the **Discipline Committee** for a 6-year term to 2027 to replace Rev. Ann Bassett, Rev. Delores Donnelly, and Rev. Nathan Hilkert who have completed their terms.
  
  - 2 lay (male or female) members of the **Consultation Committee** for a 6-year term to 2027 to replace Wanza Tina Trice-Culpepper and Imran Siddiqui who have completed their terms.
  
4. As part of its written report to the 2021 Synod Assembly, the Nominating Committee should specify the demographic requirements associated with each position to be elected.
  
5. At the beginning of the nominations process, the Nominating Committee should publish its criteria for narrowing the field of candidates from two to four people for each position.
  
6. Recruiting of candidates is an important role of the Nominating Committee. The

Committee is urged to recruit more than the minimum number of candidates necessary to meet each of the inclusivity requirements.

- 7.** Biographical forms for nominees should include the following open-ended question: “Why are you interested in being elected to this position?”
- 8.** Include good quality photographs of each nominee as part of the biographical information provided to assembly voting members.
- 9.** The nominations process should be conducted with the goal of issuing a final, complete list of nominees no later than May 1, 2021.
- 10.** At the conclusion of its deliberations, the Nominating Committee should notify those who are and are not nominated.

11. The following elections process values should be emphasized in materials provided to Synod Assembly voting members and in the verbal report of the Nominating Committee to the Assembly:

- Transparency in the application of Synod Assembly rules and constitutional mandates throughout the election process
  - Assurance that all inclusivity goals (as stated in the constitution, bylaws, continuing resolutions, and Rules of Organization and Procedure) will be fully achieved
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#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION & RATIONALE:

At its June 2011 meeting, the Synod Council approved (with some modifications) the recommendations of the Nominations/Elections Task Force that had been appointed to review these processes. The approvals included a specification that the Synod Council annually provide guidance to the Nominating Committee regarding the next elections cycle. This process is similar to the one used for the Budget and Finance Committee; providing such guidance helps assure that major policy decisions are made by the Synod Council, rather than by a committee or task force.

Items 1 and 2 of the recommended action specify which of the 2020 elections are of concern for the Nominating Committee during the coming months. In addition to the positions listed, elections for synod council conference representatives from Conferences 6 – 9 will take place at the 2020 assembly. Because the conferences nominate their own representatives, the Nominating Committee has no role for these nominations.

Items 3-6 and 8-10 in the recommended action are consistent with guidance issued by the Synod Council each year since 2011.

The request to include pictures on the biographical forms (item 7) was first made for the 2019 elections. That was done in response to numerous requests from assembly voting members each year for pictures of the nominees. During its deliberations, the 2011 Nominations/Elections Task Force debated at length the potential dissemination of nominees' pictures. The Task Force's decision was to recommend *against* the inclusion of pictures at that time, due to the poor reproductive quality of many photos and the resultant negative ramifications for nominees. Improvements in technology since 2011 and the 2019 decision to provide *only* electronic biographical information for the Assembly were factors that made it possible to include pictures for the 2019 elections cycle. That decision was well-received and the guidance to include pictures is once again included in the proposed action.