

## Frequently Asked Questions by Committee / Task Force Chairpersons ELCA – Southeastern Synod

(Revised January 2018)

**1. How will the synod office maintain contact with me as chairperson?** Most contacts with you will be via e-mail or phone. Thus, as soon as possible following your election as chairperson, you should e-mail your contact information to [synod.office@elca-ses.org](mailto:synod.office@elca-ses.org) so that your correct e-mail and phone number(s) are readily available to the synod staff.

**2. How do I find out what my committee / task force is supposed to do?** The purpose of each committee is described in either a bylaw or a continuing resolution within Chapter 11 of the synod's governing documents, available [here](#). Because task forces are considered more temporary in nature, they are not usually included directly in the synod's governing documents. A statement of a task force's purpose is generally approved by the Synod Council at the time that the task force is created. All such statements of purpose are included in the Synod Council minutes, available on the synod's [Archives](#) page, under the Resources tab.

**3. How long can a task force exist?** The synod bylaws specify that task forces generally should not exist more than two years without being reauthorized by the Synod Council. Thus, when a task force is created, the Council specifies a date by which the task force must: (a) be reauthorized; (b) be converted into an ongoing committee; or (c) cease to exist. The input of existing task force members will be considered by the Synod Council prior to making a decision about this matter.

**4. Can future committee / task force meetings be listed on the synod calendar?** Yes. The synod office would like to include all meetings of all synod committees / task forces on the online synod calendar. To assure that your meetings are included, chairpersons are asked to notify the synod office of the date, time, and location of all meetings as soon as they are scheduled. Meeting details should be e-mailed to [synod.office@elca-ses.org](mailto:synod.office@elca-ses.org), with the phrase "CALENDAR ITEM" in the subject line.

**5. How is my committee / task force funded?** When a new committee or task force is approved by the Synod Council, a small amount of initial funding may be allocated to it. In subsequent years, most groups receive their funding through the annual synod Ministry Funding Plan. Each summer/fall, committee and task force chairpersons are contacted by the synod's Budget & Finance Committee about their funding needs for the following year. Chairpersons must fill out online forms to detail those needs; the Budget & Finance Committee reviews all submissions and makes recommendations to the Synod Council for its January meeting. Funding decisions by the Synod Council are communicated to committee / task force chairpersons in late January; approved funding becomes available to committees / task forces on February 1. A link to the online form for submitting funding requests is available on the synod's [Forms and Documents](#) page, under the Resources tab.

**6. How does my committee / task force access approved funding?** Approved funding may be accessed by submitting an expense voucher, signed by either the committee / task force chairperson or the synod staff liaison assigned to the group. Chairpersons are urged to exercise careful stewardship and assure that spending does not exceed approved levels. Synod expense vouchers are available on the synod's [Forms and Documents](#) page, under the Resources tab.

**7. Do meetings of my committee / task force have to be conducted using Roberts Rules of Order?** No. Many groups, including the Southeastern Synod Council, find it useful to operate by a process known as Consensus Decision-Making. An explanation of this process is available at: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Consensus\\_decision-making](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Consensus_decision-making).

**8. How often should our committee / task force submit reports to the Synod Council?** The Synod Council meets three times a year (usually in January, May/June, and September). It is helpful to have written reports of activities from all committees and task forces for each of these meetings. Prior to each Synod Council meeting, committee / task force chairpersons are notified by e-mail of the deadline for submitting reports.

**9. What should be included in reports to the Synod Council?** The Synod Council welcomes regular reports of committee / task force goals, meetings, programs, and other activities. Occasionally a committee / task force may wish to recommend that the Synod Council take a specific action. Whenever your group recommends that the Synod Council make a particular decision, you should include the recommendation in your report. Try to make the recommendation as specific as possible, and be sure that it is clearly labeled as an "Action Request" within the report. Though not required, you are welcome to use the synod's template as a guide in writing your reports, available on the synod's [Forms and Documents](#) web page, under the Resources tab.

**10. Should we also write a report for the Synod Assembly each year?** Each committee / task force is expected to make an annual report to the Synod Assembly. Details for submitting reports are e-mailed each spring to chairpersons. Committee / task force reports to the Synod Assembly usually also serve as reports for the May/June meeting of the Synod Council.

**11. How are committee / task force members chosen?** It is the Synod Council's responsibility to approve members of most synod committees and task forces. At least 60 percent of the membership of most committees / task forces must be lay persons. In making its appointments, the Synod Council welcomes suggestions regarding potential members and considers the interests and abilities of those persons, as well as the synod's inclusivity goals for gender, persons of color or primary language other than English, and status as a youth / young adult. Geographic diversity within the synod may also be a factor for some committees / task forces.

**12. How long can a member serve on my committee / task force?** Because of the temporary nature of a task force, its members usually do not have specific terms or term limits. In contrast, members of committees are appointed for a term of a set number of years (usually ranging from 2 to 6 years). Most committee members are also subject to term limits (usually ranging from 1 to 3 terms). Details for individual committees are specified in the bylaw or continuing resolution

governing it, which are included in Chapter 11 of the synod's [governing documents](#), posted on the synod's webpage under the About tab.

**13. Are committee / task force members automatically reappointed when their terms end, until they have served the maximum number of terms?** The Synod Council usually gives strong preference to current committee / task force members who are willing to be appointed to another term. However, reappointment is not automatic. As members near the end of their terms, the committee chairperson should check with them about their willingness to have their names submitted to the Synod Council for possible reappointment.

**14. What happens if a member of my committee / task force resigns?** If you become aware that one of your members has resigned, you should immediately notify both your staff liaison and the synod office ([synod.office@elca-ses.org](mailto:synod.office@elca-ses.org)).

**15. As a chairperson, how can I best be informed of events and developments within the Southeastern Synod?** One good way to stay informed of decisions is to review the minutes of each Synod Council meeting. Minutes are posted as part of the synod's Archives pages [here](#), under the Resources tab. Another excellent way to stay informed is to subscribe to the synod's electronic newsletters. You can sign-up in the "Connect with Us" box on the synod's home page ([www.elca-ses.org](http://www.elca-ses.org)).

**16. How can my committee / task force submit an article for the synod's electronic newsletter?** Potential articles may be e-mailed to Carolyn Davis ([cdavis@elca-ses.org](mailto:cdavis@elca-ses.org)), who serves as the editor of the Southeastern Synod E-News Weekly. Please note that article submissions may be edited prior to publication.

**17. Who should I contact if I have questions that are not answered here?** Most synod committees and task forces have one or more synod staff liaisons assigned to them. Chairpersons are urged to consult with their staff liaison when planning meetings and programs. If you do not know who your staff liaison is, or if you have questions about reporting to the synod council or synod assembly, e-mail Michelle Angalet ([mangalet@elca-ses.org](mailto:mangalet@elca-ses.org)).