

Influencing Ministry Through Resolutions and Memorials

CREATED TO BE CONNECTED

The synod staff is already preparing for the 2025 Synod Assembly. Our theme, *Created To Be Connected*, continues to emphasize the ways we are one in Christ even in the midst of diverse backgrounds, opinions, politics, and theological lenses. I am looking forward to our time together.

One of the things that happens regularly at Synod Assemblies is that resolutions and memorials are brought to the floor to be considered. These are ways of initiating ministries or providing policy direction in the synod and throughout the ELCA. (Resolutions are specifically for the Northeastern Iowa Synod and memorials are passed on for action at the next ELCA Churchwide Assembly.)

The benefit to this system is that the Synod Assembly is the highest level of decision making in the synod. When something is passed by the Synod Assembly, the Synod Council and synod staff must work to accomplish the goals of the resolution. The same is true for the Churchwide Assembly, the Church Council, and churchwide staff.

In order to create a resolution or memorial that will not only be passed by the Assembly, but will succeed in its intent, there are some additional things to consider.



- Are there adequate resources in the synod budget to accomplish the goal?
- Do we have people who are willing and able to do the work?
- Does a similar ministry or policy already exist? Is work currently being done to put something similar in place?
- Is the goal compatible with current governance (constitution, bylaws, continuing resolutions, and ELCA policies)?
- Is a resolution or memorial the best avenue for accomplishing your goals? Are there other avenues that may be more efficient and timelier? This is especially true as we meet in Assembly every other year now.

Great ideas can often bog down because one or more of these considerations are overlooked. (It can also be problematic when passionate people turn a proposal over to people who are not as passionate about the issue—but that's another story.)

If you, your peer group, or network have an idea that you would like to see take root in Northeastern Iowa or in the ELCA, I invite you to schedule a conversation with me. If necessary, we can include it in budget proposals, ensure that it is not happening elsewhere in the church, provide language and structure that aligns it with existing governance and policies, and explore other avenues to accomplish your goal.

With a little discernment done together early in the process, we can increase the likelihood that we are connected with ministries which the Holy Spirit is already working among us.

— *Bishop Kevin Jones*

(Editor's Note: Bishop Kevin Jones is on sabbatical until Dec. 29, 2024. This article was written prior to his sabbatical.)