

July 23, 2018

Dear Fellow Members and Congregations of the North American Lutheran Church:

Greetings in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

At our 2019 Annual Convocation in Indianapolis, NALC delegates will elect a new Bishop. In discussing how the NALC might best prepare for this important election, the Executive Council agreed it would be beneficial to provide congregations and potential Convocation delegates a packet of informative materials.

Included in this packet are:

- A handout stressing the importance of strong lay delegations at all NALC Convocations, especially next year in Indianapolis as we elect our new bishop. On the back of this handout is an estimate of the costs a congregation can anticipate in sending at least two delegates (one layperson, one clergy)—costs that are well worth bearing!
- The portions of the NALC Constitution governing Convocation delegations (including mandated proportions of lay and clergy delegates), governing elections, and defining the ministry of the Bishop;
- Recommendations—approved by the Executive Council—from the 2015-2017 Task Force that studied the NALC's procedures for electing its Bishop;
- The questions candidates for Bishop will be answering in the biographical materials they provide to the Convocation;
- A booklet of prayers, hymn suggestions and Scripture readings to use in the coming months to prepare for the election of our new Bishop.

May the Lord guide you as you pray, discern, and discuss how your congregation and delegates will be involved in the election of the next Bishop of the NALC.

Peace and blessings,

The Executive Council
North American Lutheran Church

LAY PARTICIPATION NEEDED AT THE NALC ANNUAL CONVOCATION ESPECIALLY WITH THE AUGUST 2019 ELECTION OF A NEW BISHOP IN INDIANAPOLIS

From its birth, the North American Lutheran Church has committed itself, as one of its four Core Values, to be **congregationally focused**. For the NALC to grow and prosper, our congregations and their leaders need to stress the importance of participation in the NALC's Convocations, and include in their budgets enough money for both laity and clergy to attend and vote – especially in 2019 when we call a new Bishop. In doing so, we have the opportunity to be part of a truly 1st Century church body!

Our NALC Constitution (7.02) requires at least 50% of the delegates with voting privileges at Convocations be laity. We are blessed that many clergy realize the importance of attending the Annual Convocation. But year after year, there have been less than an equal number of lay delegates in attendance, which is leading to a growing imbalance in representation. This imbalance is a failure to uphold the mandates of the Constitution and has other ramifications as well. ***Help us remain congregationally focused by encouraging lay people to vote in this important election and to participate in the work of the greater Church.***

Other benefits of attending the Annual Convocation for laity include:

- Becoming aware of the ministries, programs, people, and resources available to help your congregations at home.
- Hearing what's happening in discipleship across the continent and around the world.
- Learning about our leaders' vision for our church.
- Gaining ideas and specific ways your congregation can bring Christ's message to your communities and work with other NALC congregations.
- Voting on other matters of the greater church.
- Attending workshops and presentations.
- Meeting like-minded people from across the United States, Canada, and other countries and make vital contacts.
- Being inspired by worship, speakers and fellow participants as we all seek to be faithful followers of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Executive Council of the NALC is contacting you now, so that you can discern how to include lay and clergy representation in your budget for the Annual Convocation. The NALC's own budget subsidizes some of the expenses. Limited financial assistance is available for which congregations may apply. Please contact the Dean of your Mission District for the application form. Also some Mission Districts may offer support of their own.

We ask that you prayerfully discern the importance of your congregation being represented at our Convocation each year, but ***especially in 2019***. We also ask you to include financial support in your annual congregational budget to help make it affordable for your pastor and one or two lay delegates to attend. In doing so you will strengthen your own ministries and help to make the election of a new Bishop a widely shared decision of both lay persons and clergy across our entire Church body, thus maximizing the support the new bishop will experience in serving the NALC in the years ahead. (*Please see cost estimates on the back.*)

PER PERSON COST ESTIMATES FOR 2019 NALC CONVOCATION ATTENDEES

For Drivers

	Registration*	Hotel	Pkg	Mileage**	Food***	Total
2 nights	\$225	\$347	\$100	\$200	\$75	\$947
3 nights	\$225	\$523	\$150	\$200	\$100	\$1198

For Flyers

	Registration*	Hotel	Air	Ground travel	Food	Total
2 nights	\$225	\$347	\$400	\$110	\$75	\$1157
3 nights	\$225	\$523	\$400	\$110	\$100	\$1358

*Registration includes Convocation and Mission Conference only. It does not include Woman's Conference (c. \$100) or Theology Conference (c. \$150)

** Mileage is figured at Government rate of .55 /mile. Congregations may have different and less expensive reimbursement rates.

*** Although some meals are provided during the convocation, there will be need for additional including breakfasts and while traveling. These are conservative estimates.

NOTE: For those staying for additional events, extra hotel days should be figured at \$175/day. This includes taxes.

Article 7 – Annual Convocation

7.01 A Convocation of the NALC shall be held annually.

7.02 Delegates with voting privileges at a Convocation shall be the ordained ministers of the NALC and at least an equal number of laypersons. Each congregation of the NALC shall elect one lay delegate to the Convocation for every 750 baptized members, or fraction thereof, of such congregation. For purposes of determining the number of lay delegates that a congregation may elect, associate members (those holding primary membership in another congregation) shall not be counted. In the event that the total number of lay delegates elected pursuant to the preceding sentence is less than the total number of ordained ministers, the Executive Council shall apportion additional lay delegates based on the relative size of the congregations of the NALC. To the extent appropriate to maintain good order, and subject to any action by the Convocation, the Executive Council may adopt procedures relating to the timing of delegate selection and to verifying the credentials of all delegates.

7.03 All members of the Convocation are delegates and as such represent their congregations.

7.04 The responsibilities of the annual Convocation shall include: election of the Bishop, the Executive Council, and any other position requiring election; adoption of a budget for the subsequent calendar year; consideration of teaching statements; reception of reports; and other items of business as may be determined by the Executive Council or by the Convocation.

Article 8 – Bishop

8.01 The Bishop shall be an ordained minister who is a member of the NALC. The Bishop shall serve as the chief pastor and chief evangelist of the NALC, responsible for ensuring the priority of the Great Commission (Matthew 28: 16-20) in the life of the church.

8.02 The Bishop shall carry out a pastoral ministry within the church, serving as pastor for the ordained ministers and congregations of the NALC. The Bishop shall preach the Gospel, forgive sins, administer the Sacraments, and judge doctrine. (Augsburg Confession XXVIII) The Bishop shall carry out a ministry of visitation throughout the church, will be a defender of the faith, and will promote the mission of the church. The Bishop shall be the chief ecumenical officer of the NALC.

8.03 The Bishop will, with the concurrence of the Executive Council, authorize all ordinations to the ministry of Word and Sacrament. The Bishop will normally conduct the rite of ordination. A candidate for the ministry may submit a request to the Bishop to appoint a particular ordained minister to preside at the ordination on behalf of the church, which shall be approved absent extraordinary circumstances.

8.04 The Bishop shall be the chief executive officer of the NALC, and will serve in a collegial manner with other leaders of the NALC. The Bishop shall have both voice and vote ex officio in all committees, task forces, and similar bodies of the NALC.

8.05 The Convocation shall elect the Bishop from a ballot consisting of candidates identified by the Nominating Committee and any candidates nominated from the floor. The Nominating Committee shall include on the ballot all candidates who (a) have been nominated by an NALC congregation or by the Executive Council; (b) have agreed to serve if elected; and (c) have provided the information requested from all candidates by the Nominating Committee. Any Convocation delegate may nominate an additional candidate, whose name shall be added to the ballot if (a) the candidate agrees to serve if elected; and (b) the candidate provides the information provided by other candidates to the Nominating Committee. Information on all candidates other than those nominated from the floor shall be provided to the members of the NALC no later than 90 days prior to a Convocation that will elect a Bishop.

8.06 On any ballot for Bishop, any candidate who receives a majority of the votes cast shall be elected. If no candidate receives a majority on the first ballot, all but the top four candidates by votes received, including ties, shall be eliminated. Thereafter, if no candidate receives a majority, the candidate receiving the fewest votes, plus ties, shall be eliminated until two candidates remain. When two candidates remain, voting shall continue until one candidate receives a majority.

**Congregations nominate candidates for bishop.
Watch your mail for nominating forms.**

TASK FORCE STUDYING THE NALC'S PROCEDURE FOR ELECTING A BISHOP
Recommendations Approved by the Executive Council, January 25, 2017

1. We recommend that candidates for election to the office of Bishop address the Convocation by spoken word, including giving responses to questions. If there are more than four candidates on the ballot, such speaking should commence after the number of candidates has been reduced to four as provided by Article 8, Section 8.06 of the NALC Constitution.
2. We recommend that a set of instructions be provided by the Bishop and/or the General Secretary to the Nominating Committee and the Elections Committee. In addition to many other important matters, these instructions should include:
 - a. that the Nominating Committee urge pastors to be open to the encouragement of those who approach them as possible candidates for the office of Bishop, prayerfully considering whether God is calling them;
 - b. that the Nominating Committee encourage those pastors who aspire to the office of Bishop to make their aspirations known to their congregations or to the Executive Council;
 - c. that the Nominating Committee encourage NALC congregations, at all worship services during the year prior to the election of a Bishop, to pray that God would make known to us the one He has chosen for this ministry; and encourage the people of the NALC to offer similar prayers in their private devotions as well;
 - d. that the Nominating Committee, before including candidates for the office of Bishop on the ballot, verify that they are ordained ministers of the NALC in good standing;
 - e. that the Elections Committee counsel the Convocation to a spirit of solemnity throughout all elections;
 - f. that the Elections Committee discourage applause or other demonstrations when election results are announced;
 - g. that the Elections Committee urge strict adherence to the Convocation agenda's published times for balloting.
3. We recommend that the Convocation agenda, in years when a Bishop is to be elected, maximize the time devoted to the election process, and therefore reduce the amount of time devoted to other business. We also recommend that Convocations in years when a Bishop is to be elected be a half day longer than in other years.
4. We recommend, when an incumbent Bishop is a candidate for re-election, that the General Secretary preside over the Convocation during the election for Bishop.



BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION – CANDIDATE FOR BISHOP
Biographical information to be completed by candidate.

Basic biographical information (marital status, children/grandchildren, education, hobbies, etc.):

Word and Sacrament ministry:

Mission Experience:

In your ministry and life experience, what has prepared you to fulfill the role of Bishop of the North American Lutheran Church?

Describe how the four Core Values of the NALC would guide your ministry as Bishop, and how those values can become more and more prominent in the life of the NALC and its congregations.

What spiritual gifts and skills has God given you to bless this ministry?

What is your understanding of discipleship as a strategic direction for the NALC?

What should be the NALC's most important ministry priorities?

What challenges do you see facing the NALC?

What hopes do you have for the mission of the NALC?

What tangible actions can the NALC, its mission districts and its member congregations take to live out our commitment to be a Christ-centered and mission-driven church?

Describe how you experience God active in your daily life.

List a favorite Scripture verse and tell why it has meaning for you.

I am willing to serve if elected, trusting God to help and guide me.

Rev. 5/4/18