



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

Orientation for the Members of the Alaska Synod Council 2016

Alaska Synod
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**Now that I've been elected.....
What do I need to know?**

The Alaska Synod **Assembly** which meets once a year, is the direction setting and decision making body of the Synod. The Alaska Synod **Council** is the governing body of the Alaska Synod ELCA during the remainder of the year when the Synod Assembly is not in session. The Alaska Synod Council carries out the business of the Alaska Synod and implements the decisions and directions of the Alaska Synod Assembly.

As members of the Alaska Synod Council you are individually, and we as a council, partners in the Churchwide mission of the ELCA. We often have Region 1 staff and Churchwide staff attending our meetings to be a resource for particular items of business. Please know that your participation is a valuable part of both Synod and Churchwide efforts.

The Alaska Synod Council meets three times a year: usually March, October, and immediately following the Alaska Synod Assembly. Each meeting is normally two days in length, although the one following the Alaska Synod Assembly is only a few hours.

You have been elected to represent an area (cluster) of Alaska and the congregations within that area. We encourage you to send a letter to each of those congregations telling them you are now their representative.

Here are answers to some of the most commonly asked questions:

How do I get information about the meetings?

The Synod office will send out an email reminding members about the next meeting. An agenda will also be emailed to you.

How do I get there?

If you are on the road system and can drive, you will be reimbursed for mileage. If you want to know the mileage rate call the Synod office . If you will be flying, contact the Synod office and travel arrangements will be made for you.

There is no cost to you to come to the meetings. In the interest of good stewardship, we ask that you contact the Synod office well in advance of your travel to get the best price.

If you need a ride from or to the airport please let us know. We will be glad to pick you up from and take you back to the airport.

Can I get reimbursed for expenses?

The Synod will reimburse you for out-of-pocket expenses related to travel to and from Synod Assembly and Council meetings. Contact the Synod office for more information.

Where do I stay?

Almost all Synod Council meetings are held in Anchorage. Many members have friends or relatives who live in the Anchorage area and stay with them.

If you would like the Synod office to arrange housing for you, we need to know at least **two** weeks in advance. We do not assume any arrangements for anyone; we need to be told each time. Call the Synod office if you want the Synod office to arrange housing.

The Synod does not pay for hotel rooms; however, you are welcome to stay in one at your own expense and we will provide your transportation.

The Synod does not pay for rental cars.

What do I do for meals?

Light Breakfast and Lunch (when in session)

are provided by the Synod, as well as light snacks, coffee, etc...Lunch breaks are generally short — time to eat and maybe a short break.

Dinner one evening is often an optional social event at the house of the Synod VP or other volunteer.

Let us know if you have special dietary needs so that we can be prepared.

Can I come to Anchorage early or stay after the meeting?

Certainly. If you come early or stay after the meeting, your housing and your meals during that time are at your own expense. Tell the Synod office when you want to travel.

What should I bring to the meeting?

You will be emailed a packet of information for the meeting, including the Minutes from the last meeting. The Synod Office can provide hard copies for you if you request in advance. You may receive additional written materials at the meeting. Please read prior to the meeting.

What are my responsibilities?

1. You will be expected to attend all of the Synod Council meetings, and to be present at meetings for their duration.
2. Please ensure that all of your contact info is current in the Synod Office.
3. You will be expected to be an active voice (and vote) on the Council by expressing your opinions, sharing your knowledge, and contributing your expertise or insights as appropriate. You will be expected to support and uphold the decisions of the Council.
4. You will likely be assigned to be an active, voting, and participating member of a Synod committee or task force. You will be expected to make a report to the Council on the work of that committee/task force. You will support and advocate for that group and will faithfully present their needs, concerns, and ideas to the Council and the Synod Assembly.
5. As a Synod Council member you are a voting member of the Synod Assembly. It is expected that you will attend the Alaska Synod Assembly each year and that you will speak to issues that have been discussed during council meetings. Congregational voting members have little idea what might have been discussed at council meetings and need to know how and why we arrived at decisions. The Synod will pay for your travel to Assembly.
6. You are to make it known within your cluster that you are an Alaska Synod Council member. Congregational members are encouraged to give you feedback, suggestions and ideas to bring to the council.
7. You are expected to report to the congregations of your cluster, either in writing or in person, the actions of each council session. You can use the minutes of each meeting for the basis of your report, if you wish.
8. You are asked to pray for the ELCA, the Churchwide Bishop, the Alaska Synod Bishop, and members of the Alaska Synod.

Is there anything else I should know?

We tend to be a collegial group of people. We work hard, debate with each other (sometimes even stamp our feet); but we love each other and find the time to share our joys and our concerns with each other. We do spend some time just visiting and learning to know each other. We consider that time well spent.

Casual dress is appropriate for these meetings. On occasion we go out in the evening for a meal, and casual clothing is acceptable.

Please call the Synod office if you have any questions or need more information.

(907) 272-8899