



THE LUTHERAN CHURCH—MISSOURI SYNOD

Minnesota South District

...joyfully serving together in making disciples of Jesus Christ

A Primer on Parliamentary Procedure

PURPOSE OF PARLIAMENTARY LAW AND PROCEDURE

The purpose of parliamentary procedure is to carry out the aims of the assembly in an orderly and fair manner, to expedite business, to insure justice and fairness to all, both the majority and the minority.

It is not the purpose of parliamentary procedure to make the conduct of business in an assembly difficult, or to entangle an assembly in technicalities, or to provide a channel for individuals to flaunt their parliamentary knowledge. The purpose is to make business flow more smoothly and make it easier for everyone. Above all, there should be a spirit of Christian love and trust.

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PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE AT A GLANCE

The motions or points listed below, 1 through 9, are in order of precedence. In other words: when any of them is pending, you may not introduce one listed below it. You may introduce one that is listed above it.

You want to...	You say...	May speaker be interrupted to make this motion?	Is second required?	Is motion debatable?	Can this motion be amended?	Is vote required? What %?
1. Adjourn	I move we adjourn.	No	Yes	No	No	Yes; Majority
2. Recess	I move we recess.	No	Yes	No	No	Yes; Majority
3. Raise a question of privilege	Question of privilege, Mr. Chairman	Yes	No	No	No	No
4. Lay on the table	I move to table this matter.	No	Yes	No	No	Yes; Majority
5. Previous question	I move the previous question.	No	Yes	No	No	Yes; 2/3
6. Postpone definitely or until a certain time	I move we postpone this matter until...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes; Majority
7. Commit or refer	I move we refer this matter to a committee.	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes; Majority
8. Amend a motion	I move this be amended to read...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes; Majority
9. Main Motion	I move that...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes; Majority

The items listed below are general points, proposals, and motions, and they have no order of procedure over one another. You may introduce any one of them at any time, except when a motion to adjourn is pending; a motion to recess is pending; or a question of privilege is pending.

You want to...	You say...	May speaker be interrupted to make this motion?	Is second required?	Is motion debatable?	Can this motion be amended?	Is vote required? What %?
1. Object to error in procedure due to a personal affront	Point of order.	Yes	No	No	No	No
2. Request information	Request information.	Yes, if urgent	No	No	No	No
3. Verify voice vote by a count	I call for division of the house.	No	No	No	No	No, unless someone objects, then majority
4. Object to consider a matter you think improper	I object to consideration of the question.	Yes	No	No	No	Yes; 2/3
5. Take up a matter that has been tabled	I move we take from the table...	No	Yes	No	No	Yes; Majority
6. Reconsider matter already disposed of	I move we reconsider our action relative to...	Yes	Yes	Yes, if original motion was debatable	No	Yes; Majority
7. Consider matter out of scheduled order	I move we suspend rules and consider...	No	Yes	No	No	Yes; 2/3
8. Vote on a ruling of the chair	I appeal the decision of the chair	Yes	Yes	Yes, if original motion was debatable	No	Yes; Majority

SUBSTITUTE MOTION

In the case of a substitute motion, we shall follow the so-called “Behnken Rule.” That is, the convention shall first decide by majority vote whether or not to consider the substitute motion. If the decision is in the affirmative and the substitute motion is adopted, the original motion fails. If the substitute motion does not receive favorable action either to consider or adopt, the original motion is again before the house.

Convention Rules

1. The voting body is composed of the voting members, one pastoral and one lay delegate from each parish. (According to Synodical bylaw 4.2.2, a “parish” is comprised of any accredited single congregation or multi-congregation parish. A multi-congregation “parish” is afforded one pastoral and one lay delegate vote. A temporarily vacant parish is entitled one lay vote. See also District Handbook 4.2.13.3)
2. Voting delegates must wear their badges at all sessions and sit in the section reserved for voting members.
3. In the absence of the voting lay delegate, a properly credentialed and registered alternate lay delegate may become the congregation’s voting delegate.
4. Only members of the voting body may introduce motions and vote. When requesting the floor for making motions or for discussion, a delegate must identify himself/herself by name and the name of the congregation he/she represents in order to be recognized. Convention decorum calls for formal respectful discourse, addressing the chair as “Mr. Chairman” and delegates as “Delegate.”
5. A speaker is limited to two (2) minutes for each issue. No one may speak more than twice to each question unless consent has been given by two-thirds (2/3) of the delegates.
6. All reports and resolutions are to be in writing. A copy is to be presented to the secretary at the time they are presented.
7. A motion from the floor must be presented in writing, signed by the maker, if requested by the chairman.
8. If a substitute motion is offered and seconded, the presenter shall be offered two minutes to provide the rationale for presenting it. A member of the Floor Committee presenting the original motion shall also be offered two minutes to speak to the substitute motion. The convention shall then first decide by majority vote without debate whether or not to consider the substitute. If the decision is in the affirmative and the substitute motion is subsequently adopted, the original motion fails; if the substitute motion does not receive favorable action either to consider or to adopt, the original motion is again before the house. (This is the so-called “Behnken Rule” for dealing with substitute motions.)
9. **So-called “friendly amendments” will not be accepted per Robert’s Rules. Once a motion has been stated by the chair, it is no longer the property of the mover, but of the assembly. Any amendment, “friendly” or otherwise, must be adopted by the full body, either by vote or by unanimous consent, which the chair will facilitate with proper discretion. [This is different from last convention.]**
10. No motion is necessary to accept reports and resolutions of the officers or floor committees.

1 11. Voting Delegate Procedures

2 a. Voting shall ordinarily be accomplished by use of an electronic response system that
3 requires delegates to be in their seats during the times when such voting will occur.

4 b. In balloting for all elected positions (including that of President and Vice Presidents),
5 the convention will follow Synodical Handbook Bylaw 4.7.3, which reads:

6 i. Candidates receiving a majority on the first ballot shall be declared elected.

7 ii. When a second or succeeding ballot is required for a majority, the candidate
8 receiving the fewest votes and all candidates receiving less than 15 percent of
9 the votes cast shall be dropped from the ballot, unless fewer than two candidates
10 receive the 15 percent or more of the votes cast, in which case the three highest
11 candidates shall constitute the ballot.

12 iii. In every election balloting shall continue until every position has been filled by
13 majority vote.

14 c. Majority = more than half. Plurality = a candidate with the most votes but not a
15 majority.

16 12. In the case of power outage that require paper ballots, all such ballots are to be destroyed
17 at the end of the convention.

18 13. Any unfinished item of business or program at the hour set for recess in the convention
19 program is resumed at the following meeting or at a designated time set by the chairman.
20 The chair will have the privilege of calling up for action resolutions which, in his judgment,
21 must be acted upon by the convention before adjournment.

22 14. No convention discussions or decisions may be released for publicity purposes while the
23 convention is in session, unless first approved by the President and the Director of Commu-
24 nications.

25 15. The parliamentary authority is *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised* (latest edition) unless in
26 conflict with the bylaws of the Minnesota South District and/or The Lutheran Church—
27 Missouri Synod.

28 16. The Parliamentarian interprets the rules and advises on parliamentary procedure when
29 asked to do so.

30 17. Announcements should be handed to the pages who will deliver them to the Convention
31 Manager. At the Convention Manager's discretion, announcements will be made from the
32 podium; others will be posted on the message board.

33 18. Electronic equipment, including laptop computers, iPads, tablets, cell phones, smartphones,
34 etc., can be used for convention business within the convention hall, using battery power
35 only. No personal extension cords will be allowed, nor will any extension cords be provided.
36 Use of electronic forms of communication on the floor to persuade or influence voting is
37 strictly prohibited.

1 19. These rules may be amended or suspended by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the voting
2 body.
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4 Convention Glossary

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6 **AD HOC COMMITTEE:** Special committee with a limited assignment and a limited life.

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8 **ADVISORY DELEGATE:** A certified member of the Convention with the right to speak without vote;
9 however, if appointed to a floor committee, entitled to vote there.
10

11 **AGENDA:** List of items of Convention business “to be done.”
12

13 **ALTERNATE:** A full-time substitute to take the place of a delegate to the Convention, if necessary.
14

15 **AMEND:** To change or modify a resolution or motion.
16

17 **APPEAL:** An appeal from a decision of the chair requires that the decision be referred to the
18 Convention for its immediate decision by a vote.
19

20 **AUDIT:** Official examination and verification of accounts.
21

22 **BYLAW:** A rule of the District ranking immediately below the constitution in authority and above
23 standing rules.
24

25 **CALL THE QUESTION:** See QUESTION
26

27 **CHAIR:** The presiding officer of the Convention, usually the President, or temporarily a Vice President.
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29 **CONSTITUTION:** The statement of the basic principles and structures of the Synod, the highest
30 continuing authority created by the association of congregations, pastors, and teachers constituting
31 the Synod. The synodical Constitution is also the constitution of all of its Districts.
32

33 **DIVISION OF THE HOUSE:** A vote taken by rising to verify a voice vote at the call of the Chair or at
34 the request of a voting delegate.
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36 **FLOOR COMMITTEE:** A working group of Convention voting and advisory delegates to whom the
37 processing of a share of Convention business is entrusted for recommendation in turn to the
38 Convention proper.
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40 **GENERAL CONSENT:** An informal method of disposing of routine and generally favored proposals by
41 assuming approval of a request unless immediate objection is raised.
42

43 **HANDBOOK:** A manual containing the District or Synodical Articles of Incorporation, Constitution,
44 and Bylaws.
45

46 **IN ORDER:** Correct from a parliamentary standpoint at a given time.
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1 **LAY ON THE TABLE (TABLE):** See TABLE
2

3 **MAJORITY:** More than half the votes cast. The Synodical Constitution provides: "All matters of
4 doctrine and of conscience shall be decided only by the Word of God. All other matters shall be
5 decided by a majority vote." This means a majority in all instances except those which involve a
6 proposed constitutional amendment; these require a two-thirds affirmative vote of all votes cast. All
7 elections are determined not by simple plurality but by absolute majority.
8

9 **OUT OF ORDER:** Not correct from a parliamentary standpoint at that particular time.
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11 **OVERTURE (MEMORIAL):** A recommendation or proposed resolution submitted by a member
12 congregation or other authorized group for consideration by the convention.
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14 **PARLIAMENTARIAN:** A person designated by the Chair to advise him on the applicability of
15 parliamentary principles and procedures in a given situation.
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17 **PENDING:** Not yet decided. A pending motion is one that has been stated by the Chair but is not yet
18 disposed of by vote.
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20 **POINT OF ORDER:** Any delegate may promptly call attention to the fact that the rules of the
21 Convention are seemingly not in force by saying, "I rise to a point of order." Upon hearing the point
22 made, the Chair rules as to its validity.
23

24 **POSTPONE:** To defer action on a question or proposed resolution (1) indefinitely or (2) until a certain
25 specified time.
26

27 **PREAMBLE:** The introductory part of a resolution or report, usually in the form of "whereas"es. The
28 assembly has the right to perfect these since they are part of the resolution when presented together
29 with the "resolved"s.
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31 **PREVIOUS QUESTION:** The motion calling for the previous question stops all discussion or debate if
32 two-thirds of the voting delegates vote "aye" after a motion has been made and seconded to call for
33 the previous question. When two-thirds of the voting delegates have responded "aye," the Chair must
34 immediately call a vote on the motion pending before the Convention.
35

36 **PRIVILEGED MOTION:** A motion, such as to recess, to fix the time of the next session, and to change
37 the Order of the Day. It takes precedence over all other motions.
38

39 **QUESTION:** A subject or point of debate or a resolution to be voted on.
40

41 **QUORUM:** The fewest number of delegates that can be present and still permit business to be legally
42 transacted. At least one-third of the voting delegates of the District shall constitute a quorum. (Bylaw
43 4.2.14)
44

45 **REPORT:** Usually the formal accounting given by an officer, a board, a commission, or a committee of
46 the discharge of its responsibilities under the Constitution and Bylaws of the Synod, such an
47 accounting to be evaluated by the delegate convention of the Synod.
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1 **RESCIND:** To annul or to cancel. To undo or reverse a previous decision.
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3 **RESOLUTION:** A formal proposal submitted previously in writing by a Convention floor committee for
4 action by the Convention.
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6 **SUBSTITUTE AMENDMENT:** When a full paragraph, section, or resolution is dropped and another is
7 inserted in its place. (Behnken Rule)
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9 **TABLE (LAY ON THE TABLE):** To set aside a motion or a proposed resolution for consideration in the
10 indefinite future. If adopted, it usually kills consideration of and action on the main motion by
11 postponing it without a set time to take it up again. If this is not the intent, the motion should really be
12 not to table, but to postpone to a set time.
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