

Report of Committee on Agenda and Program
(Proposed Assembly Agenda)
2026 SOUTH CAROLINA SYNOD – ELCA ASSEMBLY
June 11-13, 2026



2026 South Carolina
Synod Assembly

The 2026 SC Synod Assembly will be held June 11-13, 2026 at the Brookland Baptist Banquet and Conference Center, West Columbia, SC.

The theme of our 2026 South Carolina Synod Assembly is “Created to Create”.

In Ephesians 2:10, Paul writes, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." The Greek word for "workmanship" is poiēma, from which we get the English word "poem." This verse beautifully illustrates that we are God's masterpiece, His poem, created to perform good works. Our creativity and good deeds are not just random acts; they are a direct result of our creation and a reflection of our creator.

God creates and then makes humanity in His image to be fellow creators. From the initial command to tend the garden (Genesis) to the call to do good works (Ephesians), scripture consistently reinforces the idea that we were "created to create"—to build, innovate, and steward the world in a way that brings glory to our creator. This is a fundamental part of our identity and purpose.

In addition to spotlighting ministry stories from our synod, we will be doing the important and holy work of electing a new synod bishop. Even as we prayerfully discern and elect a new bishop, we will be taking time at this Assembly to come together and honor and give thanks to God for the ministry of Bishop Ginny Aebischer.

Artists from across the synod were invited to showcase their work in a special art exhibit and cocktail reception. As we celebrate gifts of artistic expression, we will recognize the gift of Bishop Ginny's 37 years of artistic ministry!

We are a Synod gifted with so many incredible and creative leaders, faithful congregations and members and artists and it is exciting to be able to bring this celebration to the 2026 Assembly.

The Nominating Committee met in November and have spent hours of faithful work in creating a slate of nominees for elections. We have 21 positions up for election in 2026. This team was careful in their selections, taking time to consider gifts, varied ages, roles within the church, experience, and locations across the state. We thank them for their work. In addition, we have an ecclesiastical ballot as we elect a new Bishop.

It's a joy to be able to plan opportunities to gather once again, not just to conduct the necessary business of the Synod, but to share the incredible stories of ministry happening across our congregations, institutions and partners and learn from one another. Guided by the theme, "Created to Create," I hope this 2026 South Carolina Synod Assembly will inspire us all to utilize our gifts—to build, innovate, and steward the world in a way that brings glory to our Creator. Thank you to everyone who worked to make this Assembly a powerful time of inspiration, sharing, and excitement, leading everyone to proudly proclaim: "THIS is my church!"

The Committee on Agenda and Program Recommends:

1. That nominations from the floor of candidates for any elections held at this 2026 Assembly be accompanied by the requested biographical data on the official form provided for that purpose;
2. That the Committee of Reference and Counsel receive no motions or resolutions after today, June 11, 2026 at 5:30 pm;
3. Other election provisions
 - a. The results of the first ballot for bishop shall be posted in the registration area at Brookland Baptist Banquet and Conference Center, outside the Carolina Ballroom at the Marriott Columbia, and online as soon as they are available on Thursday night, June 11, 2026.
 - b. Persons wishing to withdraw their names after the first ballot for bishop must complete a withdrawal form, which is available at the same place where the results are posted and at the Secretary's desk. Submit the completed withdrawal form to the Secretary's desk by 9:45 am, Friday, June 12, 2026. If a person wishes to remain on the ballot they must complete a biography form, which is available at the same place where the results are posted and at the Secretary's desk. Return the completed biography form to the Secretary's desk by 9:45 am, Friday, June 12, 2026.
 - c. A person, who is not present at Assembly, will be contacted by phone from members of the Conduct of Elections Committee to confirm their wish to remain on the ballot or to withdraw their name for bishop.
 - d. Provided there is no election on the third ballot for bishop, the three persons (plus ties) receiving the greatest number of legal votes on the third ballot will be asked to complete a disclosure form for nominees and submit the form to the Secretary's desk.
 - e. The newly elected bishop is required to provide a written consent to a background check after the election results is announced and prior to installation.
4. That the Bar of the Synod be designated as the registered voting members participating in this assembly who are seated at the tables with the white tablecloths and gold runners;

5. That the Bishop, as Presiding Officer, be given authority to call for items on the agenda in the order deemed appropriate, primarily for the purpose of time management, and specifically with regard to balloting, resolutions and special recognitions during the Assembly;
6. That the proposed agenda be a guide for the 2026 Assembly of the South Carolina Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

ASSEMBLY SCHEDULE

10:00 AM	Display Table Check In
11:00 AM	General Check In
11:00 AM	Committee - Reference and Counsel (by invitation, as needed) Committee - Conduct of Elections (by invitation)
11:15 AM	Sound Check with Worship Band
1:00 PM	Orientation for Voting Members
1:30 PM	Assembly Opens

Thursday, Session 1 – 1:30 PM-5:30 PM
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Order for Opening of Assembly and Worship

Snack Break

Welcome and Announcements

Introduction and Practice of Voting Procedure

Organization of Assembly

Reference and Counsel Part 1

Report of Synod Council Part 1

Preparation for Bishop Election

Ecclesiastical Ballot for Bishop

Nominating Committee Report

Ministry Report

Introduction of New Leaders to Synod

Ministry Story

Report of Treasurer

Report of Synod Council Part 2

Ministry Story

Announcements

Prayer

End of Session

Dinner on Own

7:00 PM Beer and Hymns – Dessert Bar at the Marriott

Friday, Session 2 – 9:00 AM-Noon

Gathering Music
Opening Prayer
Ministry Story
Celebrating Church Anniversaries
Results of Ecclesiastical Ballot for Bishop Election
Reference and Counsel Part 2
Ministry Story
Report of Synod Council Part 3
Ministry Story
First Ballot General Elections
Ministry Story
Stretch Break
Second Ballot for Bishop Election
Results of Second Ballot for Bishop Election
Celebrating 50th Anniversaries of Ordination
Ministry Story
Ministry Story
Centering Prayer as a Spiritual Practice
Announcements
Prayer for Lunch
Lunch

Friday, Session 3 – 1:00-5:00 PM

Gathering Music
Ministry Story
Ministry Story
Presentation of Candidates for Bishop Election
Third Ballot for Bishop Election
Results of Third Ballot for Bishop Election
Second Ballot General Elections
Ministry Story
Report of Vice President
Report of ELCA
Ministry Story
Report of Synod Council Part 4

Ministry Story
Snack Break
Ministry Story
Keynote Address
Report of Bishop, DEM and Congregational Vitality
Stretch Break
Presentation of Top 3 Candidates: Q&A Bishop Election
Fourth Ballot for Bishop Election
Ministry Story
Results of Fourth Ballot for Bishop Election
Announcements
End of Session
Dinner on Own
7:00 PM Art Show and Bishop's Celebration with heavy hors d'oeuvres and bar at the Marriott

Saturday, Session 4 – 9:00 AM-Noon

Gathering Music
Opening Prayer
Ministry Story
Reference and Counsel Part 3
Worship with Necrology
Ministry Story
Fifth Ballot for Bishop Election
Results of Fifth Ballot for Bishop Election
Bishop-Elect Address
Mission Support Video
Ministry Story
Third Ballot General Elections
Reference and Counsel Part 4
Unfinished Business
Reference and Counsel Part 5
Announcements
Worship with Installation of Synod Council
Closing of Assembly

2026 SC Synod Assembly Committees & Volunteers

Agenda and Program Committee

Wendy Davidson, Assembly Manager
Neal Fischer, Director of Communications
Kelley Mintz, Bulletin of Reports

Registration

Katherine Davidson

Worship & Music Leadership Team

The Rev. Megan Lineberger, Co-Chaplain	Deacon Andrew More, Necrologist
The Rev. Ginger Litman-Koon, Co-Chaplain	The Rev. Jesse Canniff-Kuhn, Lead Musician

Communications & A/V Technology

Neal Fischer, Director of Communications	The Rev. Joshua Kestner, Writer
Lumi Global	The Rev. Kris Litman-Koon, Writer
George Cartledge, Lead Photographer	The Rev. Gary Loadholdt, Writer
The Rev. Amanda Burke, Photographer	The Rev. Matthew Titus, Writer
The Rev. Emily Blackburn, Photographer	Beth Trump, Writer
The Rev. Heather Apel, Lead Writer	The Rev. Rebecca Wicker, Writer
Celie Addy, Editor	Walt Hampton, Production
Nancy Appel, Writer	Raymond Morris, Production
Deacon Kathleen Cartledge, Writer	Mary Katherine Goynes, Social Media Lead
The Rev. Michele Fischer, Writer	Adriana McMurphy, Social Media
The Rev. Lisa Isenhower, Writer	The Rev. Rebecca Boatwright, Social Media

South Carolina Synod Council

Bishop Ginny Aebischer	Tex Davis
Andrew Boozer	Nancy Appel
The Rev. Ozzie Herlong	The Rev. Mary Finklea
Raymond Hendrix	The Rev. Michael Shackelford
Mary Katherine Goynes	The Rev. Eric Fink
The Rev. Josh Kestner	Norma Price
Jeffrey Stringer	Morgan Nesmith
Cindy Davis	Irina Roof
Randy Fellers	Michael Lutz
Beth Trump	Thomas "Van" Matthews
Joyce Rose-Harris	Cheryle Noyes
The Rev. Megan Lineberger	The Rev. Heather Apel

The Rev. Eric Little

Jaime Lleras

Assembly Music

Deacon Kathleen Cartledge, Musician

Ms. Pegi Roberts, Vocalist

2026 New Leaders to the SC Synod

Deacon Andrew More

The Rev. Zach Harris

Nominating Committee

The Rev. Jackie Utely, Chair

Mr. Dave Bowers

Deacon Ashlyn Cox

Mrs. Sheree Caughman

The Rev. Christina Johnson

The Rev. Kenneth Gillikin

Ms. Carrie Nicholson

The Rev. Wade Roof

Mr. Jeffrey Stringer

Conduct of Elections Committee

The Rev. Mike Watson, Co-chair

Deacon Katie Justice, Co-chair

The Rev. Rebecca Wicker

Deacon Ashlyn Cox

The Rev. David Adams

The Rev. Laura Swanson

David Lucas

Karen Lucas

Deacon Dallas Shealy

Daniel Koon

The Rev. Emily Stolba

Deacon Kimberly Heindl

Kevin Wicker

Caroline Langston

Len Fulmer

Raymond Morris

Committee of Reference and Counsel

Linda Shealy, Chair

The Rev. Hank Moody, Parliamentarian

The Rev. Christina Johnson

The Rev. Ralph Hill

Randy Fellers

Jeffrey Stringer

Cheryle Noyes

The Rev. Rick Carter

The Rev. Ozzie Herlong

*We deeply appreciate everyone's assistance in making this Assembly possible.
Please forgive us for any names that were inadvertently left off this list.*