



**HANDBOOK FOR
SYNODICAL WOMENS
ORGANIZATION**

SECTION B -South Carolina Synodical Women’s Organization

Board of the synodical women’s organization

Each synodical women’s organization shall have a board that shall serve as the interim legislative authority between conventions of the synodical women’s organization. They may not take any action that is reserved exclusively for the convention of the synodical women’s organization or that conflicts with action taken by the convention. The board is a group of individuals, elected by the convention of the synodical women’s organization and empowered by the law and constitution to set direction for the organization and carry out day to day operations. Board members are responsible, both as a group and individually, for establishing plans and policies to fulfill the purpose of the organization.

Serving on the board of a synodical women’s organization. You have just had a synodical convention and you have a new board, some who are serving a second term, and some have been elected for a first term. There are a few things you should do first:

Get to know each other. There are a variety of ways to do this. One example is: Ask each woman to write down five things about herself, four being true and one false. Each woman, in turn, shares their list and the group tries to figure out which item is the false one. There are many such activities. Be creative!

Decide how the board will work together. It is the responsibility of the group members to make sure everyone adheres to the norms. When someone is not performing according to established and agreed-upon standards, it is the responsibility of the group to call it to that person’s attention. Here are some of the norms used by the churchwide executive board in the past:

- 1. The board will focus on matters relevant to its work and mission.**
- 2. The board speaks with one voice on board actions.** Whatever the final decision of the board is, even if you disagreed with it and voted against it, you do not speak your opinion after the final decision is made.
- 3. All voices should be heard on an issue.** Everyone has an opportunity and sometimes an obligation to speak. One person should not monopolize the conversation. The president should keep a list of those wishing to speak, and one person does not speak twice until all those wishing to speak have been heard.
- 4. All opinions are equally valued.** One person’s opinion is as important as another’s.
- 5. Board business remains in the boardroom.** This is probably one of the most important. “Board business remains in the board room.” This means that there should not be any outside or behind-the-scenes conversations between two, three or more board members about a decision that has been made or a matter to come to the board for discussion. Whatever you have to say about an issue should be said during the discussion of the matter at the meeting and nowhere else. Nothing upsets the workings of a board more than having a few people discussing an issue, sometimes with negative comments, behind the back, as it were, of the entire board. This behavior is counter-productive not only to the synodical board but to the entire organization.

Set your vision for the coming year/two years. Decide on programs you will support, what events you will hold and what projects you will support. Look to the actions taken at your synodical convention for priorities along with actions from the triennial convention that involved synodical organizations and units.

Complete a talent assessment of each board member. This will give insight as to what gifts a woman has so you can select the right role or job for each board member. Use the program resource Gifts for You: Opening Your Spiritual Gifts, available as a free downloadable PDF at www.womenoftheelca.org.

Set meeting times. The board shall meet at least two times each year. Special meetings may be called by the president or, in the event of their death, resignation, or incapacity, by the vice president or the administrative committee. A majority of the members of the board shall constitute a quorum.” It is the responsibility of the president to set board meetings and special meetings, either by herself, or in consultation with the board’s executive committee or the entire board. Others may be consulted as needed, especially in the case of the synodical convention. It is the responsibility of the secretary to notify all interested parties of meeting dates, times and locations once established.

Set an agenda. To set an agenda, you need to determine what work you want to accomplish at a particular meeting. There are some core items that should be part of every agenda - date, time, and location of the meeting; call to order; roll call of members present, guests, etc.; welcome; devotions; adoption of the agenda; reports from each officer, committee reports, and other reports; new business; and unfinished business. Other items may be added as needed and can change with each meeting.

Assess your meeting. It is helpful to assess your meetings. At its simplest form, two different board members could serve at each meeting as “observers.” During the meeting, they take note of the engagement of board members, how conflict was managed, whether the board stayed on task, whether materials were prepared and distributed in advance, whether adequate time was allotted for discussion, etc. Then, at the end of the meeting, the observers share their observations with the board. This process helps board members hold each other accountable and gives assurance that the board members are fulfilling their responsibilities.

Maintain a constitution and bylaws. This constitution should be reviewed by your board and reviewed often. There are two ways a synodical constitution can be changed:

1. Proposed amendments are submitted to the churchwide executive board for review and action prior to February 15 or September 15. The churchwide executive board at its spring meeting will consider proposed amendments submitted prior to February 15, and those submitted prior to September 15 will be considered at its fall board meeting. You will be notified of the board’s decision by mail.
2. Constitutional changes may also be proposed by the churchwide executive board and voted on in the affirmative at the triennial convention. These changes then should be automatically made to your synodical convention.

After changes to a synodical constitution are made, an updated constitution must be sent to the churchwide office for the attention of the churchwide secretary.

Keep minutes. Minutes are the historic record of the work of the organization. Minutes should be an accurate account of decisions made at board meetings and conventions and should include all attachments. Committee reports may be incorporated into the minutes and need not be included as attachments. Minutes must be kept for the lifetime of the organization. Minutes of executive committee meetings, acting between board meetings, are to be treated like board and convention minutes. Copies of minutes should be provided to board members and, after approved by the board, posted on the SC WELCA website.

Define duties for officers and board members. All board positions should have job descriptions. The constitution gives us some insight as to the responsibilities of the officers and board members. However, others who will be performing various duties for the organization should also have job descriptions. Job descriptions should be developed by the board in accordance with the expected outcome of the assigned task. Job descriptions identify agreed-upon expectations and provide benchmarks for evaluating whether a task is being completed and how well it is being completed. Review the job descriptions regularly so they do not become outdated or irrelevant to the ministries in which your officers and board members are engaged.

Board Job Descriptions

The Synodical Board meets approximately four times per year. The primary functions of this Board are planning the upcoming Convention, attending the various conference fall and spring meetings/gatherings, and working with conference and congregational unit leaders when asked.

Requirements for being a SWO Officer or Board member are to be a participant in an ELCA congregation and have a willingness to serve for at least one 2-year term. All officers and board members are eligible for one re-election to the same position. No elected officer or board member shall serve on the board in the capacity of officer and/or board member for more than seven consecutive years. The term begins immediately following installation at the SC WELCA Convention, except for the Treasurer, whose term begins February 1 of the following fiscal year. It is recommended that Officers and Board members be computer literate, and familiar with email communication and social media.

SWO President

- Preside at all conventions of the synodical women's organization and at meetings of the board and administrative committee (officers).
- Ensure that the constitution and bylaws of the synodical women's organization are duly observed and that the actions thereof are carried into effect, and appoint all committees not otherwise provided for.
- Be an ex-officio member of all committees of the synodical women's organization except the Nominating Committee.
- Submit a report to each regular convention of the synodical women's organization concerning their work, with observations and recommendations affecting the synodical women's organization as she may deem important.
- Serve as liaison with the churchwide women's organization and attend the meetings of the Conference of Synodical Presidents
- Represent the synodical women's organization at or appoint representatives to inter-Lutheran and ecumenical associations and councils in which the organization participates.
- Be familiar with social media such as email, Facebook etc.
- Establish date and times as well as provide an agenda for SWO board meetings.
- Submit articles for the *Ripple*, the SC WELCA newsletter.
- Submit a report for the SC Synod Assembly Bulletin of Reports on behalf of the Synod Women's Organization.
- Address the SC Synod Assembly on behalf of the Synod Women's Organization, generally held in June.
- Attend Conference spring and fall meetings/gatherings as able.

- Prepare the synodical update report for conference meetings/gatherings and assign board members to present the update report and the installation of new conference leaders at the meetings/gatherings.
- Plan or designate a board member to plan Leadership Team Building (Leadership Training) for all conference officers, board members and nominating committee,
- Write the script for the annual convention.
- Establish convention committees: Credentials, Elections, Nominations, Minutes, and Reference and Counsel.
- Be in communication with the designated churchwide representative for the convention. Provide a contact host for her.
- Select a parliamentarian for the convention.
- Complete reports of the annual Convention and submit to Churchwide.
- Lead the delegation to the Triennial Conventions held every third year in designated cities.

SWO Vice President

- Act in the absence, disability, or resignation of the president. She shall assume the duties of the president until the vacancy is filled by the board of the synodical women's organization at its next regularly scheduled meeting.
- Perform such other duties as requested by the president or the board.
- Other duties may include liaison to the convention planning committee.

SWO Secretary

- Be the secretary of the board and on the executive committee of the synodical women's organization.
- Be responsible for recording and distributing minutes of the synodical convention, board meetings, and the executive committee meetings.
- Give the units notification of the regular convention at least three months in advance and of a special convention at least one month in advance.
- Keep a correct register of the roll of units, along with the names of the officers/leaders of these units.
- Secure from the units such reports as from time to time may be required.
- Perform other duties as directed by the board.
- Provide for the gathering and preserving of historical records and documents.

SWO Treasurer

- Provide for the keeping of all records and be accountable for all funds.
- Be responsible for disbursing funds in accordance with the financial policies of Women of the ELCA and the budget of the synodical women's organization.
- Present a complete report, including an audit, to the synodical women's organization convention and an interim report to each board and executive committee meeting.

SWO Board Member

- Transact necessary business and make programmatic decisions between conventions.
- Set policies required for effective and efficient functioning.
- Supervise and coordinate the work of all committees that the board may appoint.
- Identify board members for networking between the churchwide organization and the unit in both programmatic and organizational concerns.
- Determine the time and place of each convention.
- Prepare the proposed agenda, rules of procedure, and program for adoption at each convention.
- Report its actions to each regular convention.
- Recommend the budget to the regular convention.
- Fill vacancies in the offices and board membership until the next convention.
- Determine the fact of the incapacity of an officer or board member to perform their duties and determine if she shall be removed from their office in accordance with the policies and procedures of the churchwide Executive Board. For removal of an officer or board member, a two-thirds vote of the total board shall be required. A mail vote shall not be used to affect the removal of an officer or board member.
- Act in such other matters as may be delegated to it by the convention of the synodical women's organization.

The RIPPLE Editor. Responsible for receiving articles and pictures from officers, board members, and other pertinent information for inclusion in *The Ripple*.

- *The Ripple* Editor is an appointed position for a two-year term by the President with the approval of the officers and board members. This position can be re-appointed.
- Necessary articles will be assigned at each board meeting. Editor will follow up with these assignments to ensure all articles are included in the newsletter.
- Acknowledge article receipt. Send reminder emails as needed.
- Submit draft to officers for review.
- Submit completed newsletter to the printing company no later than twenty days after article deadline set by the President at the board meeting.
- Notify President and Circulation Manager the day *The Ripple* is sent to the printing company.
- Attend board meetings, if possible.
- Attend SC Women of the ELCA conventions, with fees covered by convention fund.
- Attend conference meetings, if possible.
- Take or collect pictures of interest for inclusion in the newsletter.
- Write articles on items of interest from conference and convention observations.

The RIPPLE Circulation Manager. Responsible for finalizing *The Ripple* mailing list by the established deadlines. *The Ripple* shall be sent to all officers and board members, congregational pastors, unit presidents, Region 9 SWO presidents, CWO contact, Sister ELCA Synod president, our Companion Synod contacts, and to all those who have purchased a subscription to *The Ripple*.

- The Circulation Manager is an appointed position for a two-year term by the President with the approval of the officers and board members. This position can be re-appointed.
- Maintain a current active mailing list of all those who are to receive either a complimentary or paid subscription to *The Ripple*. This is to include both the label file and the email file.
- Submit label mailing file to the printing company within 24 hours of *The Ripple* submission to the printing company by the Editor.

- Promote subscriptions to *The Ripple*. Options to subscribers are to receive *The Ripple* either by postal mail or by email.
- Attend SC Women of the ELCA conventions, with fees covered by convention fund. Provide a display for *The Ripple* to promote subscriptions.
- Attend conference meetings, if possible, to promote subscriptions to *The Ripple*.

SC WELCA Webmaster. Serves as the primary contact for all aspects of the SC WELCA website.

- Handle a range of responsibilities that includes but not limited to routine site and content maintenance, various updates to ensure sites align with the goals and objectives of SC WELCA.
- Monitor links to ensure that they continue to work.
- Collect, capture, and/or request content needed for filling out the webpages, such as text, photos, graphics and downloads.
- Update the website as requested by the SC WELCA board and others responsible for content areas.
- Update website on a regular basis to keep it from becoming static.
- Maintaining uploading speeds and capacity.

Recognizing those who complete their service.

The following order may be used when recognizing outgoing board members.

Those completing their time of service come forward and face the assembly. Names and offices may be read.

Addressing those completing their time of service.

Sisters in Christ, through your baptism you were called to lives of service as part of the priesthood we all share in Jesus Christ. You have served faithfully and well as leaders in the [name of synodical women's organization]. You have served thoughtfully, graciously and with diligence, offering strategic leadership to this synodical women's organization and to the entire women's organization. We offer to you our gratitude for the wisdom and compassion that you have given so generously in service for Women of the ELCA.

Recognizing that change must be an ongoing process and that diversity and flexibility are essential, will you continue to share your wisdom and your experience with this synodical women's organization? Will you support and encourage the future leaders of this organization and pray for them? If so, answer: I will, and I ask God to help me.

Response: I will, and I ask God to help me.

Leading the prayer.

Let us pray. Loving God, we thank you for these women. Your Holy Spirit equipped them with many gifts that have been used to support the mission and purpose of this organization. Inspire them now to new avenues of service, encouraging them to be risk-takers and making them confident in their faith. May their pathways be filled with peace. We ask this in the name of Jesus.

Response: Amen.

Addressing the assembly.

Let us stand in recognition and appreciation of these women for their gifts to God and to Women of the ELCA. *Those whose current service is ending return to their seats. The assembly is seated.*

Installation of a synodical board

The new officers and board come forward and face the assembly. The person doing the installation may read the offices and names of those who are to be installed.

Addressing the assembly.

A reading from 1 Corinthians: Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of working, but it is the same God who inspires them all in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

Addressing those being installed.

Sisters in Christ, you have been chosen for leadership responsibilities in Women of the ELCA. We rejoice in the gifts God has given you, and in your willingness to offer them for this service. Will you continue to seek to grow in faith, attending daily to God's holy Word, and listening to God in prayer? If so, respond, Yes, and I ask God to help me.

Response: Yes, and I ask God to help me.

Will you earnestly seek to affirm the gifts of others, to share the responsibilities of your office in partnership with your sisters, and to encourage others to offer their talents and skills in faithful service?

Response: Yes, and I ask God to help me.

Will you seek to lead the [name of synodical women's organization] in ministry and action, extending God's loving promise of hope to those beyond this community?

Response: Yes, and I ask God to help me.

Will you seek to promote healing and wholeness within the church, the society and the whole world?

Response: Yes, and I ask God to help me.

Do you accept the specific responsibilities for which you have been elected and will you seek to serve faithfully?

Response: Yes, and I ask God to help me.

Will you accept responsibility for the financial and constitutional order of the [name of the synodical organization] of Women of the ELCA?

Response: Yes, and I ask God to help me.

Through Holy Baptism, you were gathered into the family of God and called to minister to others, and through your election, you have been chosen to serve as leaders of Women of the ELCA. May God work through you to share hope and healing with the world in which you live. God is faithful and will graciously enable you to fulfill your task. May God's blessing give you peace.

Addressing the assembly.

Together with these elected leaders, you are called through Holy Baptism to a life of discipleship. Will you receive these leaders and work with them, pray for them, and support them for the sake of the gospel? If so, answer: We will, and we ask God to help us.

Assembly: We will, and we ask God to help us.

Addressing those being installed.

I now declare you installed as officers and board members of the [name of synodical women's organization] of Women of the ELCA, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Assembly: Amen.

Continuing with prayer.

Let us pray. Loving God, surround these women with your life-giving Spirit, inspiring them to love and serve all creation. Make them bold and courageous, Holy God, that they may help the women of this organization fulfill our mission and purpose. We ask this in the name of Jesus.

Assembly: Amen.

Addressing the assembly.

Let us stand in recognition and appreciation of these women for their gifts to God and to Women of the ELCA.

The officers and board members return to their seats.

SC Women of the ELCA events – see SC WELCA website for dates, times, and details.

Annual Convention. Held annually, usually on the 3rd weekend of June.

Conference Meetings/Gatherings. Meetings are held annually in the fall. Gatherings may be held in the spring.

Retreats.

- Camp Kinard Annual Retreat: Fellowship, devotions, Bible Study, and fun. Join us every February.
- Isle of Palms: Held annually in the spring at the Coastal Retreat Center in Charleston.

SC synod office and institutions

SC Synod Office - 1003 Richland Street, Columbia, SC 29201, 803-765-0590

www.scsynod.com

SC Lutheran Retreat Centers – 6053 Two Notch Rd, Batesburg-Leesville, SC 29070, 803-532-3183

www.sclrc.com

Lutheran Services Carolinas, SC Office – 1118 Union St, Columbia, SC 29201, 803-750-9917

www.LSCarolinas.net

Lutheran Homes of South Carolina – 300 Ministry Dr, Irmo, SC 29063, 803-749-5110

www.lutheranhomessc.org

NovusWay Ministries – 28 Spruce Dr, Arden, NC 28704, 828-684-2361

www.novusway.com

Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary of Lenoir-Rhyne University

4201 North Main St, Columbia, SC 290203, 803-786-5150 - www.lr.edu/campuses/ltss

Newberry College - 2100 College St, Newberry, SC 29108, 803-276-5010

www.newberry.edu