

**NORTHERN TEXAS – NORTHERN LOUISIANA
SYNODICAL WOMEN’S ORGANIZATION BOARD
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

POLICY STATEMENT:

A policy statement is a plan or course of action by which a group can operate in varying circumstances. When situations change and a policy statement becomes impractical, it can be changed by group approval. Policies shall be reviewed at least biennially.

1. REPORTS AND RECORDS

A. Biennial reports to the Synodical Women’s Organization (SWO) shall be prepared by committee chairpersons, coordinators, and appointees and sent to the President to be included in the Convention Bulletin of Reports. Other reports shall be submitted at the request of the President or the Administrative Committee.

B. The President shall submit a report to each regular convention of the SWO concerning its accomplishments, together with such observations as she may deem important. She shall also submit a written report to the Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod for the Synod Assembly.

C. An agenda shall be mailed two (2) weeks prior to a scheduled meeting.

D. The secretary, with the president, shall submit to the convention a report of the board, including an evaluation of the progress toward meeting goals.

E. The secretary shall prepare and mail the board meeting minutes to members within three (3) weeks following meetings.

F. At a transitional meeting within 21 days of election, new board members shall receive records from retiring board members.

G. Records on file shall include: Leaders’ Resource Book, current SWO and CWO constitutions, current policies and procedures, pertinent CWO and SWO resources, and minutes of SWO for current year and two previous years.

2. BOARD MEETINGS

A. For board meeting requirements, see SWO constitution, Article VII, Section 2.

B. Absenteeism:

1) Each officer and board member must be aware of the importance and necessity of attending board meetings and assuming her share of responsibility for the work load.

2) In the event that an officer or board member cannot attend the scheduled board meeting, she must contact a member of the Administrative Committee to advise her of the reason necessitating absence.

3) The Administrative Committee shall declare the validity of the excuse.

4) The President shall notify the board member after each absence as to the status of excused or unexcused

5) After the second unexcused absence from a regular board meeting, the board shall declare that position vacant and the president shall notify the board member being released.

6) The board president shall be responsible for the collection of all materials from the board member being released.

3. GENERAL BOARD POLICIES

A. The retiring SWO president shall be an advisory member ex officio, with no vote, on the SWO board for one (1) year, but is not required to attend meetings.

B. Printed letterhead stationery and envelopes shall be ordered for members of the SWO board to use for NT-NT SWO official correspondence. Efforts to conserve shall be followed, such as photocopying multiple copies of a letter.

C. The retiring president and all retiring officers and board members shall be publicly thanked for their services.

D. The SWO shall provide mailing lists only to ELCA-related concerns such as colleges, social organizations or services, Bible camps and special ministries, etc., when requested. If it is not clear whether an organization fits this criteria, the decision of the Administrative Committee is final.

4. FINANCIAL AUTHORIZATION FOR APPROVED WOMEN OF THE ELCA FUNCTIONS

A. Board members and appointees actual expenses incurred when preparing for or attending various meetings to meet assigned responsibilities while representing the SWO shall be reimbursed according to the following polity:

- 1) Travel (round trip)
 - a. Twenty-three cents (\$.25) per mile to the driver.
 - b. SWO board members, committee members, and appointees are advised to travel via car pool, whenever possible, to avoid unnecessary expenses.
 - c. Rental of a car or van in connection with a SWO event must be approved in advance by the Administrative Committee of the SWO board.
 - d. Air transportation is generally preferred for distances over 200 miles one way. When air transportation is not used in these circumstances, reimbursement will be for the least expensive mode of travel. Variances may be allowed at the discretion of the board.
 - e. Delegate travel to conventions shall be reimbursed by the local CU or local congregation.
- 2) Actual cost of lodging will be paid. Reasonable cost shall be taken into account by the SWO representative incurring the charge.
- 3) Meals will be reimbursed at actual cost, not to exceed \$15.00 per day.
- 4) Child care costs shall be reimbursable for board members only, up to \$25.00 per day.
- 5) Speaker expenses: When arranging for a speaker, musician or other person to participate in a SWO event, there must be a commitment, in writing between the participant and the SWO representative, specifying mileage or other travel expenses, speaking fee, lodging and any other expenses the SWO will be responsible to reimburse. Reimbursement will be made according to reimbursement policies set forth by the SWO board.

- 6) Memorial Gifts: In the event of death of a board member or immediate family a \$15.00 memorial on behalf of the board shall be sent by the treasurer to the CWO Women of the ELCA.
- 7) Any SWO member currently serving on the CWO board will be invited by the president to attend the convention and one other board meeting. Her expenses will be paid according to SWO board policy.
- 8) Administrative expenses, including supplies, printing, copying, postage, telephone calls, shall be reimbursed when original receipts are presented. Original receipts may be presented up to 60 days after expense incurred.

B. Monies and expenses shall be detailed on an expense voucher. Original receipts must be attached to the expense voucher. Photocopies of original receipts will be accepted with explanation of why original is not available.

C. If a woman wishes to donate her expenses, an expense voucher shall be submitted, and paid by the treasurer, with the monies being returned to the treasurer and designated, if desired.

D. Advances on travel expenses shall be available. A request in writing of an estimated amount shall be given to the treasurer at least 21 days in advance of travel.

E. Checks issued and classified as outstanding on bank reconciliation for three (3) consecutive months shall be voided. After the second month outstanding, the payee shall be contacted regarding the status of the outstanding check.

5. FINANCIAL AND BUDGET MATTERS

A. The SWO secures its operating funds from the portion of the congregational unit (CU) Women of the ELCA offerings sent to the SWO.

B. The NT-NL SWO board shall choose the SWO convention and non-convention event offering objective, taking into consideration the input of the convention planning committee.

C. The SWO convention offering shall consist of offerings from individual participants on the convention plus CU offerings.

D. The SWO convention shall be self-supporting. If necessary, a portion of the convention offering may be used to pay convention expenses.

E. The NT-NL SWO will financially support only those organizations which fall under the umbrella of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, or which are recommended for financial support by the church-wide organization.

F. Annual budget: See Constitution, Article VIII, Section 2.

G. Budget approval: See Constitution, Article VIII, Section 3.

H. Financial reports: See Constitution, Article VIII, Section 4.

I. Annual audit: See Constitution, Article VIII, Section 6.

J. The SWO encourages Women of the ELCA CU's to avoid assuming responsibility for special congregational projects which would hinder adequate support for the SWO.

6. HONORARIUMS FOR SWO EVENTS

A. Pastors and participants from our SWO shall receive either a \$50.00 honorarium or \$0.25 mileage, or airfare/travel reimbursement, and lodging, as necessary for participation, whichever is the greater amount.

B. Program planning committees may allow honorariums up to \$50.00 for participants from outside the SWO, without board approval. Higher honorarium requires board approval.

C. SWO officers, board members or board appointees may not accept a speaker's fee or honorarium greater than travel expenses when asked to speak on behalf of the NT-NL Synodical Women's Organization.

7. STANDING COMMITTEES AND SPECIAL ASSIGNMENTS

Before the first board meeting after convention, the president may poll the board members to determine interests and talents prior to making committee appointments and other assignments. She will make appointments, with approval of the board, for a two (2) year period. She may appoint interim committees to meet her goals for the SWO, with board approval, other than the standing committees described by policy. The board will be divided into the following committee structure and assignments:

A. Administrative Committee

This committee is composed of the president, vice president, secretary and treasurer, and shall act on behalf of the board between scheduled meetings.

B. Mission: Growth Committee:

- 1) Enable women to reach their full potential and equip them for ministry.
- 2) Nurture women's life in faith through educational, devotional, worship, witness and leadership opportunities.

C. Mission: Community Committee

- 1) Enable each woman to value herself and others as created in God's image and redeemed through Christ.
- 2) Build up and celebrate relationships which are global, diverse and interdependent.

D. Mission: Action Committee

- 1) Enable women to articulate and act upon their faith as disciples of Christ in all areas of life.

E. Leadership Committee

- 1) Provide women with leadership training and development.

F. Communications Committee

- 1) This committee shall be chaired by the secretary of the SWO and shall include as a member the editor of **Tapestry**.
- 2) Serve as communication link between the congregational unit women's organizations and the SWO board, to disseminate information to the women of the NT-NL Synod that the board deems necessary.

G. Finance Committee

Shall be chaired by the SWO treasurer and consist of the SWO Administrative Committee.

Duties include:

- 1) Prepare annual budget.
- 2) Review financial policies periodically and make recommendations to the Board regarding change or revision.

H. Constitution and Bylaws Committee

- 1) Reviews Synodical Women of the ELCA constitution and bylaws at least annually, making recommendations to the Board concerning changes.
- 2) Keep a current and up-to-date copy of the constitution and bylaws on file.
- 3) Ensure that a copy of the current adopted constitution and bylaws is provided to board members, congregational units, and conference coordinators.
- 4) Committee expenses shall be reimbursed according to board policy.

I. Policy and Procedure Committee

This committee shall consist of the Administrative Committee and the Constitution and Bylaws Committee.

- 1) The committee shall review the Policies and Procedures of the Board at least biennially.
- 2) The committee shall bring recommendations for change to the SWO board. Recommendations adopted by the board shall be included in Policy and Procedure statements.
- 3) The committee shall be responsible for providing SWO board members and other parties designated by the president with current copies.

J. Scholarship Committee

This committee shall establish guidelines and processes for awarding scholarships.

7a. ADDITIONAL APPOINTMENTS

In addition to those standing committee appointments of elected board members, the president may appoint positions as needed:

K. Offering Interpretation Coordinator

This appointee will:

- 1) Serve as Offering Interpretation Coordinator between the SWO and the CU. She need not be a member of the board to serve in this capacity.
- 2) Create awareness of offering needs through articles in the **Tapestry**, presentations at conference or SWO meetings and mailings to the congregational units.

L. Congregational Unit Developer

This appointee shall:

- 1) Develop and communicate programs to encourage the participation at the synodical level of new and inactive congregational unit women.
- 2) Develop means to determine the reason for lack of participation, using surveys and similar methods.

- 3) Educate congregational units about the need to combine efforts with the SWO in order to accomplish common goals.
- 4) Target program development for specific age groups to encourage additional participation.
- 5) Increase visibility to promote SWO and CWO programs by on-site visits to conferences and congregational units as deemed necessary. She may solicit help from board members, conference coordinators, and local congregational units.
- 6) Establish a committee consisting of one woman from each conference with the goal of developing the program outlined above.

M. Tapestry Editor

Board appointee at discretion of the president, and serves by “letter of call”. Duties include:

- 1) Member of Communications Committee.
- 2) Prepares, produces and distributes the NT-NL SWO newsletter **Tapestry** at least four times per year on a consistent basis as negotiated with the board.
- 3) Each appointed term for this position shall be two years. If this position becomes vacant, or is unable to be filled, this assignment shall be handled collectively by the board.
- 4) The **Tapestry** editor reports directly to the SWO president and shall attend all board meetings as requested by the board.
- 5) Expenses for this position shall be reimbursed in accordance with SWO board policy.

8. SWO CONVENTION COMMITTEES AND DUTIES

A. Convention Planning Committee

This committee shall be responsible for the convention program. Duties include:

- 1) Develop convention goals and choose a theme, to be approved by the board.
- 2) Select committee members and assemble other resources necessary to prepare for the convention.
- 3) Prepare a detailed budget of expected expenditures to the board for approval.
- 4) Plan a program, including activities, workshops, travel and speakers, subject to board approval.
- 5) Provide publicity and promotion for the event.
- 6) Plan the schedule and agenda in close communication with SWO board.
- 7) Contribute appropriate information to the secretary for the Bulletin of Reports.
- 8) Prepare an evaluation form and provide completed forms together with a post-convention summary to the board at the first meeting after convention.

B. Nominating Committee

The NT/NL Constitution, Article VI, Section 4, prescribes composition and requirements for the Nominating Committee. Additional guidelines and duties include:

- 1) Nominees shall be listed on the slate in alphabetical order for each position.
- 2) Biographical information, including the conference they represent, shall be given in writing at the opening of convention or included in the Bulletin of Reports.

3. The Nominating Committee shall include nominees for a disabled delegate to the Triennial Convention using the following guidelines:

- a. The term “disabled” means: a person with an impairment which substantially limits one or more of the major life activities, such as walking, seeing, hearing, etc. (This definition is consistent with the definition of “disabled” in the Federal Americans with Disabilities Act, July, 1990).
- b. This delegate will be elected in addition to the total number of delegates allotted for the NT-NL SWO. The CWO will pay all costs incurred by disabled delegates, including for a special companion, if needed. The CWO will not pay for companions, special needs or expenses for delegates unless they are elected to the special slot as the disabled delegate.
- 4) Polaroid pictures of nominees may be taken and posted at the convention.
- 5) All nominees in attendance at the convention will be introduced to the Convention prior to taking the vote.
- 6) Incumbents nominated for re-election shall be so indicated on the written Nominating Committee Report.
- 7) The chairperson of the Nominating Committee shall be responsible for providing election ballots and tally sheets.

C. Appointed Convention Committees

The SWO president, instructed by the board, shall appoint the following convention committees:

- 1) Credentials Committee
 - a. The Credentials Committee prepares a written report which contains the number of SWO officers, board members, voting delegates, visitors and guests registered after finding them entitled to accreditation. The report is submitted to the convention to certify attendance.
 - b. The committee provides each delegate a delegate card to be completed and turned in to the registrar at the time of registration at the convention.
 - c. The registrar shall be a member of the Credentials Committee. She will compile the official registration report, listing voting delegates, officers, board members who are non-delegates, visitors and guests, each time registration is closed. Thereafter, the eligible delegate count will remain the same for that date.
 - d. The registrar shall place delegate cards in order, by conference, congregational unit (CU) and city for determination of the number of CUs represented by voting attendance.
 - e. The chairperson and committee members must sign the tabulation sheets when completed to validate accuracy.
 - f. The committee prepares a Credentials Report, using credentials committee forms, which is presented to the convention. After presenting the report, a copy of the Credentials Report shall be given to the president and the secretary, with the original placed in the Credentials Committee file.
 - g. The committee chairperson shall be prepared to present the Credentials Report to the convention before each election.

2) Committee on Reference and Counsel

- a. This committee will screen all original written resolutions that require action.
- b. This committee shall prepare and submit in writing suitable resolutions designed to implement motions and recommendations referred to it by delegates.
- c. The committee shall make recommendations based on opinions of committee members regarding action by voting delegates of the convention.
- d. This committee prepares and recommends courtesy resolutions for convention action. (A copy of the previous convention report may be obtained from the secretary for guidance).

3) Committee on Minutes

- a. This committee shall consist of three women in attendance at the convention.
- b. The Committee on Minutes, together with the SWO president and secretary, are responsible for approval or correction of convention minutes. The review and approval shall take place within three (3) weeks of the close of convention. This may be done by mail or electronic transfer.
- c. The committee may review the minutes of the business sessions each day of the convention, if available.
- d. The committee shall make a report to the convention, with recommendation for change or approval. Final committee-approved minutes are mailed to the delegates.
- e. Official approval and acceptance of the minutes rests with the next full convention.

5) Election Committee

It is recommended that members of this committee not be delegates, so that the delegates may attend to the business of the Convention.

- a. The Election Committee is responsible for preparing, distributing, collecting and counting voting ballots and reporting the results to the Convention.
- b. The chairperson of the Nominating Committee is responsible for providing necessary election ballots and tally sheets.
- c. It is the responsibility of committee members to be on time for each session, ready to work.
- d. Committee members will distribute ballots only to voting delegates seated in the delegate section, and to SWO officers. (Other board members who are not delegates may not vote.)
- e. Members of the committee shall count the ballots when each vote is completed, following these guidelines:
 - i. Count the votes in a designated area away from the business session.

- ii. Count the total number of ballots cast and record the number on “Report of the Elections Committee” form.
- iii. Record the vote count for each candidate.
- iv. Re-count the ballots to ensure accuracy. Discard illegal ballots or where the intent of the voter is not obvious. (Illegal ballots are those where the voter has marked more candidates than the designated number for positions to be filled. Votes for fewer than the number needed to fill designated positions are legal ballots.)
- v. Record both the number of illegal ballots and legal ballots cast for each candidate on the report form.
- vi. All committee members counting ballots must sign the Election Committee report.
- f. The chairperson of the committee reads the report to the convention. The chairperson does not declare the election. The presiding officer will do this following reading of the report.
- g. The committee provides a copy of the report to the SWO president and secretary after it is read. The original of the report is placed into the Election Committee file.
- h. Ballots may be destroyed after 30 days.

5) Committee on Offerings

- a. This committee is responsible for overseeing the physical and monetary offerings of the convention and to provide a final report to the convention of total offerings and distribution.
- b. Committee members receive collected offerings from the pages, tally the amount, and report totals to the president and treasurer. Collected monies are placed in the possession of the SWO treasurer.
- c. Committee members are responsible to assist the treasurer as needed.

D. Other Convention Personnel

1) Committee on Pages

This committee assists the synodical convention as prescribed by the convention planning committee and SWO board. Members of this committee should not be delegates.

- a. Committee members should wear a badge, sleeve band or other conspicuous marker for easy identification.
- b. Committee members shall be at business sessions 15 minutes early.
- c. Committee members must be familiar with the program agenda, speakers and participants.
- d. Committee members shall prepare a delegate seating section at the front of the convention assembly room. Visitors must be seated behind this area unless they are speakers or program participants.
- e. Committee members will distribute materials for sessions when appropriate.

- f. Committee members act as pages, to receive offerings and deliver the money to the Committee on Offerings.
- g. Committee members should have a supply of paper and pens or pencils for convention participants to record messages and announcements. Pages will deliver messages to the presiding officer immediately.
- h. Committee members should be familiar with the meeting site and prepared to give directions to rest rooms, exhibits, dining hall and other facilities for convention participants.

2) Time Keeper

This person guides and assists the presiding officer in carrying out the agenda for the convention within the time frame allotted as published in the Bulletin of Reports.

3) Parliamentarian

This person maintains Convention order when called upon by the presiding officer or when it is necessary to maintain Roberts Rules of Order for the Convention body.

9. NON-CONVENTION YEAR EVENTS

The term “Non-Convention Year Event” shall mean any synod-wide planned gathering sponsored by the NT-NL Synodical Women’s Organization of Women of the ELCA in a non-convention (odd) year. The purpose of the gathering will be to focus on spiritual and growth opportunities together with the synodical women’s organization board, the conferences and the congregational units.

A. Guidelines

- 1) Event is to be less formal in place, atmosphere and content than convention.
- 2) The SWO board shall be responsible for initiating and providing guidance for the event.
- 3) The president of the NT/NL SWO shall appoint a board liaison to the committee for the event.

B. Board Liaison Duties

- 1) Ensure that board policies and guidelines are followed.
- 2) Act as information conduit and resource person for the committee and the board.
- 3) Actively communicate with committee members regarding meetings and planning in order to provide progress reports to the board.

C. Event Committee

This committee shall be responsible for the development of the synod-wide non-convention year event in cooperation with the SWO board.

- 1) The SWO president shall appoint the chairperson(s) of the event planning committee no later than the first board meeting following the biennial convention.
- 2) The chairperson(s) will be responsible for selecting a committee, maintaining contact with the various committee members and frequent communication with the board liaison.
- 3) The chairperson(s) shall appoint a secretary for the committee to record minutes of all meetings and planning sessions of the committee. Minutes of all meetings shall be provided to committee members, the board liaison and the SWO president.

- 4) The committee shall develop event goals and a theme, to be approved by the SWO board.
- 5) The committee shall develop a detailed budget within the monetary guidelines provided by the board, and submit it to the SWO board for approval.
- 6) The committee shall plan and prepare the program, including speakers, program agenda, plan housing, etc.
- 7) The committee shall provide for publicity and promotion of the event.
- 8) The committee shall prepare an evaluation form and provide completed forms and a post-event summary report to the SWO board.

D. Committee Guidelines

The board shall provide for the committee specific guidelines for carrying out the event.

10. RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE NORTHERN TEXAS/NORTHERN LOUISIANA SYNOD

See SWO Constitution, Article IV, Section 4, and Article VII, Section 4, Item 1G.

11. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

In order to represent the best interest of the NT/NL SWO, members of the SWO board must avoid the appearance, as well as fact, of conflict of interest. These policy statements are an attempt to provide guidance in a difficult area.

A. Multiple Positions

- 1) A member of the NT/NL SWO board may not simultaneously hold an elected or appointed position on a Conference Coordinating Committee.
- 2) A member of the church-wide women's organization board may not serve simultaneously on the SWO board.
- 3) A member of the NT-NL SWO board may not be a member of more than one –NT-NL SWO standing committee in the same time period.

B. Business

- 1) A member of the SWO board may not profit from SWO board activities. In this regard it is not allowed for a board member, or first degree relative of a board member, to conduct paid business with the board. A first degree relative is defined as a spouse, parent sibling or child.
- 2) Business promotions from persons or organizations outside the umbrella of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall not be allowed at NT-NL SWO functions or events.

NT/NL SWO Policies and Procedures
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