

**Twelfth Triennial Convention  
Women of the ELCA  
September 19-21, 2023  
Phoenix, Arizona**

**REFERENCE AND COUNSEL COMMITTEE**

(nine members, including chair)

**Purpose of the committee:**

1. To study all resolutions of a general character which are not germane to the pending question or to the report and recommendations of the executive board.
2. To report all such resolutions to the convention, with committee recommendations.
3. To conduct hearings on resolutions introduced by voting members as desired by the committee, acting in consultation with the president and the executive director.
4. To prepare courtesy resolutions for recommendation to the convention for action.
5. To act on requests to distribute materials to convention participants.

**Duties of chair:**

1. To attend a pre-convention orientation for convention business committees. (Time and place to be determined.)
2. To call all subsequent committee meetings.
  - a. Set time of committee meetings.
  - b. Obtain room assignment for committee meetings from convention office.
  - c. Notify members and resource persons individually by convention business bulletin board notices or telephone of time and place of committee meetings.
  - d. Give in writing time and place of committee meetings and hearings to convention secretary for announcement during the convention business meeting.
3. To convene all committee meetings. Communicate to committee members the purpose of the committee, their duties, and the amount of time available for completing them.
4. To appoint a recorder.
5. To convene all hearings, should they be required. (Please be sure voting members in attendance at hearing have clear understanding of purpose of hearing.)
6. To prepare the report of the committee, making five hard copies and one thumb drive

(or email the report to the secretary and executive director) and hand them to the page in front of the stage prior to entering the stage to make your report.

7. To present the report(s) of the committee to the convention as scheduled in the agenda in the *Convention Program and Reports* and at other times as requested by the presiding officer.
8. To prepare a brief, concise evaluative report of the work of the committee, suggestions for improved procedures, etc. Please submit this report to the convention office at the end of the convention.

**Duties of the committee members:**

1. To attend a pre-convention orientation meeting. (Time and place to be determined.)
2. To read carefully the reports and recommendations of the churchwide president, treasurer and executive board before coming to the convention.
3. To read and study all resolutions.
4. To invite the author(s) of a resolution to meet with the committee to explain the resolution or answer any questions about it, as necessary.
5. To review the policies and procedures of Women of the ELCA as defined in the Women of the ELCA and the ELCA Constitutions and Bylaws, and other documents as may be helpful.
6. To attend all committee meetings and actively participate in all committee proceedings to carry out the committee's purpose.
7. To be alert to discussion and actions during the convention which are related to the resolutions under consideration.
8. In consultation with the president and the executive director, determine the need for and schedule hearings on resolutions.
9. To attend all hearings.
10. To be on the alert during the convention for announcements or notices of meetings.
11. To assist the chair of the committee, when requested, in preparing the report of the committee to the convention.

**Hearings:**

A hearing provides voting members with an opportunity to express their feelings, explore ramifications of a resolution, and listen to discussion without the restriction of parliamentary procedure. It also allows for discussion at a time when it is not necessary to vote immediately.

The committee, in consultation with the president and the executive director, is to determine if a hearing is appropriate. A hearing can help:

- To clarify the intent of a resolution.

- To allow the maker of a resolution to perform an advocacy role.
- To reconcile varied points of view if they happen to be expressed in two separate but similar recommendations.

The hearing is a time for discussion only. All recommendations are to be formulated by the committee in executive session, following the hearing.

**Possible committee responses to resolutions:**

1. The committee could recommend that the convention adopt the resolution as submitted.
2. The committee could recommend that the convention adopt the resolution as amended by the committee. For example, the recommendation might include calling upon the entire churchwide organization and/or synodical women's organizations and the executive board for implementation.
3. The committee could recommend that the convention refer the resolution to the executive board for further study, for study and action, or for action. A provision could be added stating that the board make a report on the study of a particular issue and report back at the next convention.
4. The committee could recommend that the convention adopt a substitute resolution.
5. The committee could recommend that the convention defeat the resolution.

**NOTE: Whenever a resolution involves an expenditure of funds, it shall be referred to the executive board. (See Rules of Procedure printed in the *Convention Program and Reports*)**

**Resource person:**

A churchwide staff member is assigned to the committee as a resource person. She provides information about policies and procedures, as necessary, to the committee. She is not a committee member, but she must participate in all committee meetings. Therefore, she must be notified of all committee meetings.

The convention's parliamentarian may also serve as a resource to this committee.

**Materials to be provided:**

1. Resolutions.
2. Staff responses to resolutions, if time permits.
3. A copy of the current *Robert's Rules of Order*.
4. A copy of Women of the ELCA Constitution and Bylaws.

5. A copy of the ELCA Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions.