

## What Happened at the Churchwide Assembly

One thousand twenty five ELCA Lutherans gathered in Orlando to do the business of the ELCA. We adopted a social statement on “Genetics, Faith and Responsibility,” and asked the Church Council to review the process used to propose, develop and adopt social statements in this church.

The Assembly also adopted some proposals from the LIFT (Living into the Future Together) Task Force relating to the structure and governance of the ELCA. The Assembly affirmed the priority of congregations in the ELCA, as centers for mission, and recommended that congregations, with assistance from synods, develop mission plans.

There were many constitutional changes adopted, and you can find a full list at [elca.org](http://elca.org). One of the changes that I heard people discussing before the Assembly was the procedure that congregations must follow in order to leave the ELCA. It remains very similar to the process that we have had until now, with 2 exceptions. The first is the requirement that a congregation inform the Synod Office before taking a first vote. And the second is that a congregation needs to wait at least six months after a failed vote before starting the process again. The intent of these 2 changes is not to hold congregations in the ELCA against their will, but rather to foster good communication in the first case, and to insure good order and proper procedure in the second. All constitutional changes to the model congregational constitution automatically go into effect.

Details will be available on the ELCA website. For a synopsis of Assembly Business prepared by the Office of the Secretary, use this link: <http://www.elca.org/Who-We-Are/Our-Three-Expressions/Churchwide-Organization/Office-of-the-Secretary/ELCA-Governance/Churchwide-Assembly/Actions.aspx>

Remember, one of the issues we discussed at the Montana Synod Assembly was how we could get information about the church out more widely to the entire Synod. If you are reading this, print it, forward it, share it.