

HOL Orientation Program

Welcome to the House of Laity. You may have recently been elected to be a delegate or perhaps you've been a delegate for a few years and have attended Synods before. The Steering Committee has prepared this orientation to help you start to get ready for your service as a delegate and to help you find your way around the Synod. We hope you'll find it useful and that you will feel comfortable asking for explanations of things that aren't clear.

WHAT IS THE HOL?

The HOL is the House of Laity. It is one of the legislative bodies in the governance structure of the ECC. The other is the House of Pastors (ordained persons except bishops). The Ecumenical Council (all the bishops) among other things serves as an oversight body to ensure that decisions at any level are consistent with the ecclesiology of the ECC. The House of Laity is made up of delegates elected by all the communities that make up the ECC. Each community is entitled to one delegate and one additional delegate for every fifty (50) community members. So a community of 125 persons would be able to have three delegates.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE HOL?

The primary role of the HOL is to provide an equal voice for all lay persons in the ECC in the decision-making processes of the ECC. The HOL is also responsible for the financial operations of the ECC.

HOW DOES THE HOL OPERATE?

The HOL meets at the Synods, which are currently being held every two years. There is a Steering Committee, which is made up of a chair, a vice-chair/chair-elect, a secretary and several at-large members. The terms for the steering committee members are two years. The vice-chair becomes the chair after two years, and a new chair-elect is elected at the Synod.



The HOL considers a variety of issues at its meetings. One of its most important functions is to consider and approve a biennial budget. Other issues for consideration and voting include amendments to the ECC Constitution, the various ECC statutes and guidelines in which it has a voice according to the ECC Constitution.

WHAT IS THE FINANCE COMMITTEE?

The Finance Committee is responsible for recommending fiscal policies, developing budget proposals, and monitoring financial activities during each budget cycle. It is comprised of a chair and four or five other HOL members. The ECC treasurer and administrative staff meet with the committee. The chair of the Finance Committee serves as an *ex officio* member of the Steering Committee and the HOL Chair and Vice-Chair are *ex officio* members of the Finance Committee.

DOES THE HOL PARTICIPATE IN THE ELECTION OF PRESIDING BISHOPS?

Yes, there is a committee for the nomination of presiding bishops. The committee includes the HOL chair and several other HOL members. The committee manages the election process, reviews the credentials of candidates, and finalizes the nominees that then stand for election by the entire ECC at Synods.

HOW DOES THE HOL COMMUNICATE WITHIN ITSELF?

The HOL has its own discussion list which is a closed list in that only HOL delegates have access to it. Matters requiring input, information that needs to be disseminated, and other matters are sent out via this list. The list provides a medium for all HOL delegates to ask questions or have discussions among themselves and with the HOL Steering Committee. Any HOL member can post to the list.

HOW DO I GET ON THE LIST? WHO MANAGES THE LIST?

The list is managed by someone in the HOL, usually one of the Steering Committee members. As soon as you are elected as a delegate, someone in your community needs to let the Office of Presiding Bishop and the Chair of the HOL know your name and email address, and you will be added to the discussion list.

HOW DO I SEND A MESSAGE TO THE DISCUSSION LIST?

The address of the discussion list is hol@lists.ecc-voices.org. When you send a message to that list, it is then distributed to everyone else on the list. If you want to respond to something on the list, you can just hit "reply" in your email system and your reply is then distributed to everyone else. If you just want to respond to the person who sent the original message, you can change the address of your email to the individual's address. Sometimes that cuts down on the volume of messages.

HOW DOES THE STEERING COMMITTEE DO ITS WORK?

The Steering Committee meets by phone or online in most months. The meetings generally last about an hour and an agenda is sent out beforehand with relevant documents. Minutes are kept and these are shared via the discussion list and are attached to the ECC Report.

WHAT IS THE LEADERSHIP COUNCIL?

The Leadership Council is made up the Presiding Bishop, the Chancellor, the chair and vice-chair of the HOL and the president and vice-president of the HOP. It meets by phone or online monthly and deals with a variety of issues facing the ECC, particularly between Synods. One of its responsibilities is to plan for the next Synod.

WHAT IS THE SYNOD?

The Synod is a gathering of official delegates, clergy, and observers biennially to pass legislation, such as the biennial budget, amendments to constitution and bylaws, and other actionable issues. The HOL

meets several times to consider these things and to elect new officers. While the HOL meetings may have observers, only the elected delegates may vote on issues. The Synod also offers talks by a variety of ECC members and others on spiritual matters, liturgies to remind us why we're there, and workshops to help us learn from each other and to build skills. The agenda for the each Synod is on the Synod website (www.eccsynod.com). Dress for the Synod is casual. It's best that you be comfortable!

HOW CAN I BEST GET READY FOR THE SYNOD?

Check the website; read the ECC Constitution (or at least the "polity" section of it (it can be found on the ECC website) and the HOL Bylaws. Read the documents that come out in preparation for the Synod. These should mostly be available sixty days prior to the Synod. And don't forget to register for the Synod and reserve a hotel room!

WHAT IS THE ECC REPORT?

The ECC Report is published bimonthly and contains a variety of articles concerning current activities and events. HOL and HOP updates are included as well as the minutes of various groups, although some groups are better about communicating than others. You can subscribe to the Report by emailing the editor.

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