

The Process of Synod

Synod in 2020 looks a little different than we are used to! With the ongoing pandemic shaping our lives in new and surprising ways, we had to find a way to elect a bishop and still adhere to all government protocols as well as our diocesan protocols, while still following Canon 1, which is our rule about electing a bishop. This is a very complicated task. However, it was not impossible, and we are set for an electoral synod on Saturday September 12 the likes of which have never been seen in our diocese before.

We are gathering in 11 different sites. Each of the 10 regions of the Diocese will meet at a church, and the nominees, as well as our new Archbishop, David Edwards, will be at the Cathedral. The Archbishop serves as the president, or chair of an electoral synod. Each region will be connected with the others via Zoom, so that we can all hear and see each other.

Synod begins at 9 am. We always start an electoral synod with a service of Holy Eucharist. In this case, the Eucharist will be celebrated in each site, following all precautions, and we will all hear the same sermon from Archbishop David.

At the conclusion of the Eucharist, we carry on with Synod. We will hear if there are any further nominations, and then hear a report from the Executive Secretary of Synod about the numbers of delegates who are attending. If more than half the registered delegates have checked in, we have a quorum and can continue. If we have more than two thirds, that will mean that we need a simple majority of clergy and a simple majority of lay folks to elect a bishop. If we have less than two thirds of delegates, then we need a two thirds majority in each house to elect a bishop.

After the Executive Secretary reports on the numbers, Archbishop David will introduce the three nominees. Following their introductions, we will create two sessional committees – a Canons and Constitutions committee that will help if there are questions about the canons or how to proceed, and a Committee to Approve the Minutes, which will carefully review the minutes after Synod.

After sessional committees, the Archbishop will appoint the scrutineers for the day. Scrutineers are the ones who count the votes, and there are three for each location – mixed teams of clergy and lay.

After all this is done, the Diocesan Chancellor will address Synod, and talk about what makes this unusual Synod still a valid gathering. We then hear a report from the Episcopal Search Committee and the Executive Secretary will outline voting procedures..

This work is all necessary to make sure that we are doing things properly, and that people know what we are doing. After all this business, it will be time to vote. We have no clue how many rounds of voting there will be – that is up to the delegates and the Holy Spirit. After each round of voting, the scrutineers in each location will divide the votes into clergy and lay, and count them. Results are then sent into the Cathedral location, and our head scrutineer.

Although we are gathered in regions, we vote as a diocese. This means that the results for any particular region will not be published or released in any way. The only results that will be released will be the total for the round of voting for the whole Diocese.

Archbishop David will announce the results of each round of voting, and if there is no election, we will prepare for another round of voting.

Please continue to hold delegates to Synod, as well as those who have official roles in your prayers. Please pray also for those who have allowed their names to stand as candidates.