



# Upstate New York Synod

## Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

### ***Virtual congregational meetings permanently allowed:***

In the December 15 "Upstate Update" we shared this message and from Jeff Human, legal counsel for the UNYS:

"The New York Religious Corporations Law was amended by legislation signed on November 8, 2021. Under this amendment, congregations (which are New York religious corporations) may hold virtual meetings of members if the Church Council, under the congregation's Constitution or Certificate of Incorporation, is authorized to determine the place of member meetings. If the congregation decides to hold a member meeting virtually (by means of electronic communication), it must be solely a virtual meeting, not a hybrid meeting where some members participate in person and others virtually.

"Congregations may also still continue to hold meetings of members in person. It is noteworthy that under the new legislation, New York religious corporations are treated differently than other New York not-for-profit corporations."

We have received a number of questions since sharing this change in legislation.

Some clarifying notes regarding this change:

- This change reflects an end to certain pandemic-time policies regarding the ways the religious corporations function administratively.
- The bishop and other leaders in the synod have no direct influence in this decision. We share this information so that you are aware of the changes.
- Hybrid congregational meetings are now prohibited. The congregational meeting must be entirely in person or entirely online. You may still broadcast the meeting for those who cannot attend, but those who are in the meeting online are not counted in the quorum and are not able to vote.
- Hybrid council meetings are permitted under this law.

The Synod office will continue to share information as it becomes available, and legislative updates as they occur.