Statement of Etiquette for Maintaining Decorum

In order to have a fruitful, Spirit-led atmosphere on the floor of General Synod, it is important that all delegates observe some simple rules of decorum. These rules are not meant to stifle conversation or the expressing of opinions, but simply to ensure that all delegates are able to focus on the business before the synod. People should act in a courteous and considerate manner at all times and should be respectful of others, regardless of their opinions.

1. Come to General Synod prepared: read all of the reports in the workbook. Come to synod ready to ask questions for clarification and to speak to the reports through your prayerful discernment of the topics at hand.

2. When seated at tables with fellow delegates, be careful not to engage in distracting behavior. Silence your computers, tablets, and mobile phones. Take necessary phone calls away from the synod floor. In short, be courteous to those seated around you. Be aware that your conduct may affect the people around you.

3. When the time comes for debate on an item of business, you may desire to speak to that business. Stand and wait to be recognized by microphone number. When the chair recognizes you, begin by stating your name and the assembly from which you are a delegate. Then address your comments directly to the chair.

4. When it comes time to vote, you might be filled with joy or disappointment at the results. Remember that there are other delegates who feel differently than you do, and extend them the courtesy of not outwardly expressing your feelings. Maintain a respectful atmosphere, taking into account individual circumstances or opinions. This will show proper respect for the decision the synod has made.

Following these simple rules of decorum is each delegate’s responsibility. There are no “police” to monitor your behavior. It is a matter of honor. However, those who are found to be in violation of these rules of decorum are subject to discipline at the discretion of the chair of the meeting.

This statement was written and approved for inclusion in the General Synod workbook by the General Synod Council at its March 2017 meeting.