



**Southwestern Minnesota Synod**  
**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**  
God's work. Our hands.

**Bishop Nomination Information Form**  
**2015 Bishop Election**  
**Southwestern Minnesota Synod, ELCA**

Name: **Rev. Lyle A. Snyder**  
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**1. Brief biographical information including parishes served, education, conference or synod offices held, ministry you are called to at the present.**

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My ministry begins with my family. I have been married to my wife Emily for 16 years. We have a 3 year-old daughter named Astrid.

I have been the pastor at First English Lutheran Church in Tyler, MN since 2008. Prior to arriving in Tyler I spent a year doing long-term pulpit supply at St. Michael's Lutheran Church in La Grange Park, IL.

I earned a B.A. in Political Science from the University of North Dakota (UND) in 1999. I earned an M.P.A. in Public Administration in 2001 from UND as well. I graduated from seminary at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago in 2007. I have been enrolled as a D.Min. student at Sioux Falls Seminary since 2010.

I have served as the Dean of the Prairie Conference and also as the Chairperson of the Southwestern Minnesota Synod Conference of Deans. I have also worked extensively with our South African partners, as well as visiting them in 2012.

**2. How would you describe your leadership style?**

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I am direct. I believe in casting a direct vision. When I was young I played hockey. When I learned to pass the puck, I learned to pass it ahead of my teammate. My teammate would skate to where the puck is going. Leadership is no different.

I am playful. I believe in the power of play. I like jokes. Within the church we can be far too serious. I am a more effective leader when I have the same temperament my three-year old daughter has when she wears a princess dress.

I am challenging. I believe in being a challenging presence. Challenge leads to growth. Jesus rose from the tomb for our sins, so that we might not fear death, and that we might have life. He rose so that we might take risks and sin boldly.

I am connected. I believe leadership does not happen in a vacuum. It happens in a setting connected with other people. Leadership happens from a blender – getting mixed up with other people in an anxious environment.

### **3. Describe your vision of ministry of the bishop: (2015)**

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A bishop provides vision, clarity, and direction. A bishop points to a direction where God wants the larger church to go. Moses did this in the wilderness with the Israelites. Well, maybe Moses more so attempted to do this.

A bishop is a teacher. A bishop teaches about scripture and the body of Christ. Turn on the television or surf the internet and you'll be inundated with all sorts of anxious messages about God. A bishop teaches the opposite of these messages.

A bishop is a preacher. A bishop gives people Jesus wherever he or she goes.

A bishop is an administrator. A bishop does the chores. If the cattle aren't fed and the crops aren't planted, the farm doesn't produce.

### **4. If you were elected bishop, what would be your focus of ministry? – 2015**

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My focus would be to be a voice of grace in a world that tends not to believe in grace.

My focus would be set towards the declining presence and impact of our church. For 50+ years our church has faced a slow decline in participation and resources. We are in an opportune time to look at this trend, ask questions, and be different.

My focus would be to challenge the church and ask questions that are very real to our current challenges. How do we be a church when resources are plentiful everywhere we look, but they aren't in our church coffers? How do we bridge gaps of understanding between people younger than 30 and people older than 70? There are many more questions than these.

### **5. Describe your understanding of the relationship between the synod staff and the congregations' ministry partners: (2015)**

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I understand synod staff and congregational partners as co-workers in the Gospel. The synod is not the enemy of the congregations and pastors. Pastors and congregations are not the enemies of the synod. Even the surliest and most angry church members and the snarkiest and grumpiest pastors are gifts for ministry of the church.

I know not everyone operates with this same understanding.