



Southwestern Minnesota Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
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Bishop Nomination Information Form
2015 Bishop Election
Southwestern Minnesota Synod, ELCA

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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.

I am a native of our synod, born, confirmed and ordained here. My B.A.S.W is from the University of Minnesota and my M. Div. is from Luther-Northwestern Seminary. Since my ordination at Gustavus in 1983, I have served as Parish Redeveloper (St. Matthew's – Cornwall, Ontario), a Mission Developer (Westside-Barrie, Ontario) and as a Sr. Pastor (Trinity-London, Ontario and Gethsemane, Dassel, Minnesota from 2004 to the present). As a Pastor in the LCA, the ELCIC in Canada and the ELCA, I have served on several synodical committees; including Professional Leadership, Candidacy, Outdoor Ministries, Stewardship, Social Ministry and Nominations. I have chaired Professional Leadership, Candidacy and Nominations Committees and have served as a Conference Dean.

2. How would you describe your leadership style?

My preferred leadership style is collaborative. Within this model I often lead by initially studying a system and its context. Then I focus my attention on those areas where my input and leadership could be most beneficial. Beyond this, I work to establish self-maintaining systems to address the ongoing ministries of the congregation or ministry group. When it is necessary, I can adopt/assume a more executive approach, especially when it comes to dealing with conflicts that threaten the well-being of a system.

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

My vision of the ministry of the bishop is largely a pastoral image. Like a good shepherd, the ultimate calling is to shepherd and protect the synod as a whole. This includes our congregations, our pastors and our shared ministries. When tensions within our congregations and our synod are brought to the attention of the bishop, our bishop will, within the structure of our synod and its constitution, work for the best possible outcome. When a bishop must act in an executive function, the bishop will insure that the pastoral needs of those involved are met by someone not directly involved in the conflict.

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

The tyranny of the urgent often blinds us to the greater issues facing the church. Of these, the greatest issue facing the church today is our neglect of evangelical imperative. This neglect is the main reason our church has gone into decline. In an age when the church is not growing through procreation or immigration from Lutheran lands, we need to refocus our energy on equipping and supporting our congregations in their outreach to the unchurched around us. A secondary emphasis would be to support and equip our congregations in their efforts to rebuild their volunteer and financial base, which supports their ministries. My third emphasis would be to address tensions that undermine our congregations and shared ministries.

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

The ministries of our congregations, our synod, our mission partners, the ELCA and the Lutheran World Federation are all expressions of one shared ministry. The synod staff's role is to support congregations in their particular ministries, while calling forth support for our shared ministries. When it comes to congregational ministries, the synod staff will work with parishes to determine what support is required and available through the larger church. When it comes to our shared ministries, this includes lifting up these ministries with the goal of soliciting congregational support, volunteers and the financial support necessary to carry out these shared ministries.