



SOUTHWESTERN MINNESOTA SYNOD, ELCA

Bishop Election 2021

November 1, 2020

Members of Congregations in the Southwestern Minnesota Synod,

Our Synod's Mission Statement includes these words, "Together we have what we need." With that in mind, and with the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, we ask for your participation in the process to elect and call our next Synod Bishop.

Included in this mailing are resources for your congregation to use as you engage in conversations together about the gifts, skills, and attributes you would lift up in the person who would serve as this synod's next bishop. Please use these materials as you discuss and ultimately submit a name of the pastor your congregation wishes to identify for bishop. Any ELCA rostered pastor (Minister of Word and Sacrament), in good standing, in whom you discern the gifts necessary to serve well as a bishop is eligible to be nominated by a congregation. These materials will assist you and direct your conversations:

- Information from our Synod Constitution relating to the role and responsibilities of the Synod Bishop,
- Responses from ELCA Bishops in North Dakota, South Dakota, and Minnesota to two questions: How do you interpret your primary role as bishop? What aspects of the bishop's role has surprised you the most?
- Reflective questions to guide your conversations and discernment.

Also included in this packet is a link to the [Bishop Nomination Form](https://swmnelca.org/bishop-election/). This is to be completed by the congregation prior to February 15, 2021 if your congregation chooses to nominate a pastor to be part of the Bishop Election process. You will find the link on our synod's website: <https://swmnelca.org/bishop-election/>.

Your congregation should share the link to the [Bishop Biographical Data Form](https://swmnelca.org/bishop-election/) with the pastor you have nominated so that it may be completed as soon as possible but no later than April 5, 2021. Both the [Bishop Nomination Form](https://swmnelca.org/bishop-election/) and the [Bishop Biographical Data Form](https://swmnelca.org/bishop-election/) are to be submitted online. Again, those links are available at <https://swmnelca.org/bishop-election/>. All the contents of this packet are also available online at that address.

Prior to the 2021 Synod Assembly, our synod has a process in which congregations, conference assemblies, and individual members of congregations may nominate people to serve as bishop. Congregations and individuals may submit names to the Bishop Election Committee until February 15, 2021. Conference Assemblies may submit names to the Bishop Election Committee until March 25, 2021.

At the Southwestern Minnesota Synod Assembly on June 11-13, 2021, voting members will officially nominate by ecclesiastical ballot (first nominating ballot) any ELCA pastor (Minister of Word and Sacrament) in good standing to be bishop.

We are eager for you to participate in this important work and want to encourage you to add your voices to the process. Add this topic and work to your annual meeting agenda, or better yet, find safe ways to hold congregational forums and call a special meeting this fall to complete this important work. Together we have what we need! Your siblings in Christ are counting on you to join with them as we start the process to call our synod's next bishop.

Thank you!

Sincerely,

The Bishop Election Committee of the Southwestern Minnesota Synod

Gwen Arneson, Cottonwood, Committee Chair; Pat Branstad, St. James; Pastor Mike Carlson, Sauk Centre; Tom Gilbertson, Willmar; Pastor Sue Grinde, Jasper; Christina Nelson, Kandiyohi; Ferman Woodberry, Jackson, Synod Vice President; with synod staff liaisons Tammy Schacher and Synod Minister Steve Cook.



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