



# Northeastern Minnesota Synod

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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Dear Voting Member of the 2020 Northeastern Minnesota Synod Assembly,

Greetings from the Bishop Election Committee (BEC). The election of a bishop is one of the most important duties of a voting member at a synod assembly, and we would like to explain the process which is necessarily different this year.

Because of the abbreviated and virtual nature of the 2020 Synod Assembly, the BEC realized it is important to provide you with as much background information on the nominees as possible. Most of the nominee information is on the Bishop Election web page. If you click on the link to the Bishop Election on the synod home page ([www.nemnsynod.org](http://www.nemnsynod.org)) you will find extensive information for each nominee: interview video and biography, nomination statement, and written answers to three sets of questions. In addition, on the Northeastern Minnesota Synod, ELCA Public Group on Facebook, you will find videos of the three nominee forums from mid-March. Each video is in two parts, one before the forum break and one after the break. We encourage you read these documents, watch the videos, and prayerfully to consider our four nominees, Pastor David Carlson, Pastor Elizabeth “Liz” Cheney, Pastor Elizabeth “Liz” Davis, and Pastor Amy Odgren.

The modified ecclesiastical ballot method we use for electing our bishop resulted in the nomination those four synod pastors. The election method allows for additional nominations to be made on the first ballot at the 2020 Synod Assembly. Even in a normal assembly situation, this is a complicated process. In our virtual assembly this year, the complexity increases dramatically.

All balloting will be done electronically and in “real time” to comply with the need for physical distancing and the requirements of our constitution. You will receive other communications concerning the necessary tech requirements to participate efficiently but we would like to emphasize that each voting member will need a unique email address to cast a vote. Two votes from the same email address will count as an illegal ballot.

The first ballot will have the names of our four nominees. There also will be a space for adding another name. It is crucial an additional nominee’s name be correctly spelled and match the name on the ELCA roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament. If you are considering nominating a pastor on the first ballot, we strongly urge you to talk with him or her first and consider the following that must occur. (All of the forms mentioned are currently available on the BEC web page.)

The results of the first ballot will be announced prior to adjournment on Friday night of the assembly. Any first ballot nominee will need reliable internet access and it may be necessary to have access to a document scanner. As soon as the first ballot results are announced, any new nominee must *immediately* submit the following by email to the BEC: a phone number where they can be contacted, the *completed* Nomination Bio Form, and the *completed* background check Authorization & Disclosure Form. The BEC will electronically distribute the bio form to all voting members and initiate a background check.

The second ballot on Saturday morning cannot proceed until this has been done. Any nominee wishing to remove her or his name from the balloting prior to the second ballot must submit a notice to withdraw by emailing the *completed* Withdrawal Form to the BEC. After the second ballot, a nominee is removed from future ballots by not attaining sufficient votes.

We will have the second ballot on Saturday morning. Between the second and third ballots, all remaining nominees will give a brief oral statement. There could be from four to seven nominees speaking. Then further balloting continues until we have an election. When we are down to two nominees remaining, they will make an additional brief statement. The table that follows shows the percentage of votes necessary to achieve election at a given point.

<b>Ballot</b>	<b>Appearing on Ballot</b>	<b>Needed for Election</b>
First	Conference Nominees (4) plus one blank	75%
Second	Conference Nominees (4) plus anyone nominated on first ballot	75%
Third	Top seven (plus ties) from second ballot	67%
Fourth	Top three (plus ties) from third ballot	60%
Fifth, etc.	Top two (plus ties) from fourth ballot	Majority

We do not know how many ballots there will be. Other synod business will transpire between ballots, including various elections and other, synod matters that require you to vote. Please, *do not leave* our virtual assembly until *all* business is concluded, the bishop-elect has spoken, and the benediction pronounced.

If you have questions, please email the BEC at [bec@nemnsynod.org](mailto:bec@nemnsynod.org).

You will find the full report of the Bishop Election Committee in the Bulletin of Reports. It has been our great pleasure and honor to work on your behalf to facilitate the election of our next bishop. At this difficult time, we wish you good health and God's peace and blessing.

Mark Hollabaugh, Chair

Bishop Election Committee  
Northeastern Minnesota Synod