



Northeastern Minnesota Synod

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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BISHOP ELECTION 2020 GLOSSARY

Bishop: A bishop is a pastor, an ordained minister of Word and Sacrament in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), who is elected to a six-year term to provide care and oversight for the congregations and leaders of a synod. The bishop is the chief executive officer of the synod and may be elected to two six-year terms.

Bishop Election Committee: A group of people selected by the synod council to develop and implement a process for the election of a new bishop.

Call: For Lutherans, “call” or “calling” refers to the vocations of every Christian—the roles in which they live out their baptismal faith, such as family member, citizen, worker, or church member. In the context of public ministry, a call is an official invitation to become a public leader in this church. A pastor or deacon receives a call as he or she begins serving a congregation, institution, or agency of the church.

Candidate: A person whose name has been brought forward as a potential nominee for bishop.

Conference: A geographic area of the synod clustering congregations into collegial and cooperative groups to carry out the work of the synod. The Northeastern Minnesota Synod has five conferences (Heartland, Lake Superior, Kettle River, Living Waters, Laurentian), each led by a dean.

Conference Assemblies: Conference assemblies are held annually and lay the foundations for work at the synod assembly in May. Voting members from congregations in the five conferences gather for a keynote address and then meet to conduct busi-

ness, which often includes the election of synod council representatives and churchwide assembly voting members as well as the consideration of resolutions. All conference assemblies in 2020 will take place on Sunday, February 9 at 3:00 p.m.

Church Council: The church council of the ELCA functions as the board of directors, serving as the interim legislative authority between meetings of the churchwide assembly. The church council meets at least two times each year and is composed of at least 33 and not more than 45 members who are elected to six-year terms by the churchwide assembly, together with the four churchwide officers (presiding bishop, vice president, secretary, and treasurer).

Churchwide Assembly: The churchwide assembly is the ELCA’s highest legislative authority. It reviews the work of the churchwide ELCA officers and churchwide units. It establishes ELCA policy and adopts the budget for the churchwide organization. It has sole authority to amend the constitution and bylaws of the ELCA. The churchwide assembly meets triennially in regular session.

Churchwide Organization: The churchwide organization is one of the three expressions of the ELCA. It functions interdependently with congregations and synods of the ELCA. It is responsible for developing churchwide policy, standards for leadership, including ordained and rostered lay ministries and affiliation of institutions, and the coordination of the work of the ELCA both globally and throughout the territory of the ELCA.

Clergy: In the ELCA, the term “clergy” is normally used to describe those who are ordained pastors (Ministers of Word and Sacrament) of the church.

Deacon: A minister of Word and Service in the ELCA. Deacons serve in a variety of settings including congregations, synodical and churchwide offices, and specialized ministries.

Dean: From the Latin *decanus*, an official in charge of ten monks. In the ELCA a conference dean coordinates the work of congregations within the conference.

Ecclesiastical: Of or relating to a church (“ekklesia” in Greek), especially as an established institution. This term is often used to refer to the organizational and legislative functions of the church.

Ecclesiastical Ballot: The process by which the presiding bishop of the ELCA is elected and under which all nominations are made on the first ballot at the churchwide assembly. In electing its synodical bishop, the Northeastern Minnesota Synod uses a *modified ecclesiastical ballot* process.

Election of a bishop: The voting members of the synod assembly cast votes and call a pastor to be the bishop for the synod. While this process involves voting, it is a discernment of call that is guided by the gifts of the candidates that meet the needs of the synod.

Election Committee: A group of people appointed by the synod council to oversee the election process at the synod assembly.

Hotdish: The essential menu offering, along with a Jell-O salad, at every Lutheran church basement dinner.

Laity: A term referring to the people of God. This is typically used to refer to those who are not members of the ordained clergy. The collective community of lay people is sometimes called the laity.

Minister: The word means “servant,” and is sometimes used as a synonym for “pastor” or as a title for lay people who perform certain duties within the congregation, such as a “communion minister.” It can be used as a noun or a verb, and it refers to the work of all Christians—to share God’s boundless love in the world.

Modified Ecclesiastical Ballot: The process used by the Northeastern Minnesota Synod to elect a bishop. Most nominations for Bishop are brought forward at conference assemblies in the Winter of the election year; however, the modified ecclesiastical ballot process permits additional nominations to be made at the synod assembly in May.

Nominee: A candidate who has been nominated at a conference assembly, accepted the opportunity to become the future bishop, and is willing to move through the process leading to the election.

Nominee Forum: An event which brings together the candidates who are nominated for the Office of Bishop to answer questions and share insights about ministry and mission for our synod. These will take place in three locations on March 12, 13, and 14, 2020.

Ordained Ministry: ELCA members believe that God has instituted the office of ministry of Word and Sacrament within the people of God. To carry out this ministry, the ELCA affirms the call and ordains qualified people, who are referred to as pastors.

Pastor: From the Latin word for “shepherd,” pastor is used to describe an ordained minister of Word and Sacrament. A parish pastor serves in a congregational setting. The term pastor may also be used to describe an ordained minister serving in a non-congregational setting such as a nursing home, hospital, or college campus.

Presiding Bishop: An ordained minister of Word and Sacrament who is a teacher of the faith of this church and who provides leadership for the life and witness of this church. The term is rooted in worship (“the bishop presides over the worshiping assembly”) and the presiding bishop serves as the chief pastor of the ELCA, the chief executive officer of the ELCA churchwide organization and the chief ecumenical officer of the church. The presiding bishop is elected to a six-year term and may be reelected. The current presiding bishop is the Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton.

Region: There are nine geographic regions within the ELCA. Regions are comprised of several synods and serve as a means to coordinate responses by synods and the churchwide organization to mission and program opportunities within the region. The Northeastern Minnesota Synod is partnered with the other five Minnesota synods, the two North Dakota synods, and the South Dakota Synod in Region 3.

Roster: The official listings of those who have been ordained, consecrated, or commissioned and are called to service in the ELCA. Currently, there are more than 17,000 rostered leaders in the ELCA. The ELCA has a roster of Word and Sacrament and a roster of Word and Service.

Rostered Leaders: Pastors and deacons who serve in congregations and other places of specialized ministry, including academic institutions, hospitals, senior care centers, campus ministry, outdoor camping ministry, mission development.

Synod: There are 65 synods in the ELCA. A synod is typically a geographical grouping of congregations, with the exception of the Slovak Zion Synod. Each synod, in partnership with the churchwide organization, bears primary responsibility for the oversight of the life and mission of the ELCA in its territory. The Northeastern Minnesota Synod is one of six synods in Minnesota and one of the larger ELCA synods in terms of geographical area.

Synod Assembly: The synod assembly is the highest

legislative authority of the synod, with a regular meeting held annually. All ordained ministers under call, all rostered lay ministers under call, officers, elected leadership, retired pastors elected in caucus, and representative lay members from congregations within the synod serve as voting members.

Synod Council: Between meetings of the synod assembly, the synod council serves as the board of directors of the synod and the interim legislative authority.

Synod Staff: Staff in the Office of Bishop who carry out the day to day work of the synod, from coordinating training events and leading worship to conversations about community and basic communication. The staff maintains the connection between congregational ministries and the ministry of the larger church.

Voting Member: Lay members who are elected by the congregations of this synod together with pastors and deacons under call on the roster of this synod, synodically authorized ministers, retired pastors elected in caucus, the officers of the synod, and members of the synod council who participate in the business conducted at synod assemblies. The ELCA no longer uses the term “delegate,” opting instead for “voting member.” Voting members vote their conscience and are not restricted to vote the will of their congregation. They are encouraged to vote as the Holy Spirit moves them.

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

May 3-5, 2019	Synod Assembly. At this assembly, voting members will participate in discussions and activities related to the election of the next bishop.
February 9, 2020	Conference Assemblies meet simultaneously to nominate candidates for bishop. In case of a snow storm, the assemblies will meet on February 16.
March 12, 2020	Bishop Candidates’ Forum at Calvary, Mora.
March 13, 2020	Bishop Candidates’ Forum at St. Andrew’s, Grand Rapids.
March 14, 2020	Bishop Candidates’ Forum at Grace, Hermantown.
May 1-3, 2020	Synod Assembly at which the next Bishop of the Northeastern Minnesota Synod will be elected.