



Lower Susquehanna Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.



A Reconciling in Christ Synod

A Bishop's Gifts for God's Mission

**Where the hungry are fed as
we have been fed by Christ.**

INTRODUCTION

The Lower Susquehanna Synod will elect a bishop at our 2019 Synod Assembly. The Synod Council calls our congregations, our rostered ministers, and all our members to prayer as we seek the Holy Spirit's guidance in calling a bishop. The Holy Spirit is present when God's people gather and discern together the will of the triune God.

At the 2018 Synod Assembly, the Lower Susquehanna Synod adopted a "Preliminary Identification Process Leading to the Election of a Bishop". In part, it requires that the voting members from each conference meet in January to consider the gifts desirable and necessary in a bishop.

To help begin such conversation, the Synod Council has prepared this initial list of attributes it believes essential in a bishop. The conferences are encouraged to provide feedback to the Synod Secretary. The Synod Council will finalize the document for use at the March Conference Assemblies, when voting members will lift up names of ELCA pastors who possess these gifts. This list of attributes will serve as a guide for assembly voting members as they discern who possesses the gifts for the office of bishop. It will also serve as a tool for ELCA pastors to discern their gifts for call to the office of bishop.

EQUIPPING LEADERS

Our synod is committed to equipping leaders, to inspiring new disciples and to raising up new leaders. This includes our lay leadership, our youngest members in their first third of life, and our pastors and deacons. To do this, the bishop, as our synod's pastor and teacher will:

- Lead by example.
- Empower and motivate others through exemplifying trust in the Holy Spirit's power.
- Form and deepen relationships through intentional listening and walking together.
- Nurture spiritual formation and discipleship.
- Provide oversight of pastors and deacons.
- Advocate for justice in the world.
- Employ administrative ability and business sense.
- Create and manage a staff who will work together as a team focused on God's mission.



ENCOURAGING COOPERATION

In a synod jointly rediscovering the power of the Gospel, the bishop models the nurturing of life-changing relationships with God, one another and the world. To do so, the bishop needs to demonstrate openness to new ways of working together and to help members of the body of Christ recognize what it means to collaborate. As our synod moves beyond initial cooperative actions, the bishop will work alongside our leaders to identify relationships that deepen our capacity for God's mission. The bishop will:

- Build healthy relationships with pastors and deacons, lay leaders, the Synod Council, leaders of Region 8, our agencies and institutions, and the churchwide organization.
- Identify opportunities and resources for collaboration that nurture deeper connections with God, each other, and our communities.
- Embody cooperation with ecumenical and interfaith partners and secular and governmental social service agencies.
- Build stronger relationships and foster inclusiveness while eliminating "us vs. them" mentality.
- Demonstrate patience in supporting congregations as they deal with their individual realities.
- Recognize and address dissenting views and promote team work as our synod discovers new ways of being church together.

ENGAGING IN NEW MISSION

The bishop leads our synod to focus on proclaiming the Gospel, employing missional imagination, exhibiting “holy” experimentation and taking risks where others might withdraw. The bishop will recognize efforts of others in ministry around us, share resources, and seek to advocate for justice and address the physical and spiritual hunger of our neighbors. Having a true heart for new and renewing ministries, the bishop will focus on the vision of our synod. The bishop will:

- Focus on congregational vitality and help congregations grow as communities of Jesus.
- Support current congregational renewal and redevelopment efforts.
- Encourage risk taking, missional imagination and holy experimentation.
- Recognize opportunities for mission and respond with agility and fluidity.
- Encourage congregations to identify and respond to the physical, emotional and spiritual hungers around us.



A BISHOP'S GIFTS FROM THE PARKING LOT VIEW

To foster faithfulness and God's work in our synod, the bishop must possess unique inherent and learned traits with gifts to equip, encourage, and engage. The bishop will:

- Serve as shepherd to pastors, deacons and congregations.
- Possess the endowments of faithfulness to God and spiritual leadership.
- Engage the spiritual practices of discernment, self-care and an intentional prayer life.
- Be visionary.
- Establish goals and follow through to completion.
- Be articulate in missional preaching and teaching.
- Facilitate and foster healthy communication.
- Be decisive and act with authenticity, transparency and integrity.
- Maintain confidentiality.
- Have a hunger for public witness and social justice.



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