

## **Bishop's Election Overview**

At this year's Synod Assembly we have a very important discernment process that occurs only every six years – the election of a Bishop. Since this process occurs so infrequently, we thought it was important to give you an overview of the process and what the expectations are for those planning to attend the Assembly as voting members.

The election process is what is known as an Ecclesiastical Ballot. Unlike the nomination and campaigning process that is now going on for President of the United States, there is no campaigning ahead of time by individuals. The process is intended to be a discernment in which the Holy Spirit is present and we are guided as an Assembly to God's chosen person for this very important role. Despite the fact that there is no individual campaigning ahead of time, we encourage conferences, congregations and individuals to openly discuss, and prayerfully discern, what they feel are the attributes and skills they see as being critical for our Bishop prior to the Assembly. As a voter, it is important to know that your vote is up to you, not dictated by others. You are to vote your conscience with the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Conference Deans will be setting up meetings within the conferences and clusters in next several months to help prepare for the election. Your active participation in those meetings is critical for your preparation.

The election process at the Assembly is very detailed. We will have The Reverend Chris Boerger, the Secretary of the ELCA, presiding over the election to make sure that all is done according to the DE-MD Synod Constitution. Chris will make sure that we all understand the details of the election and that any open questions are addressed ahead of time to ensure a truly transparent, well conducted and fair discernment process.

So how will the process work? Listed below is an overview. It is an expanded version of what you find in the DE-MD Synod Constitution section S9.04 (see below).

- **First Ballot** – this is an open ballot. Any ordained ELCA Pastor in good standing can be nominated. We will ask you to write in your nomination on the ballot. You will need to make sure that you have the candidate's name spelled correctly. If the candidate is from outside our Synod it would be very helpful if you could provide contact details (cell phone) so that we can quickly reach that individual prior to the second ballot. This ballot will take place on Thursday afternoon at the Assembly. Typically, this ballot could have many names on it. Three-fourths of the legal votes (those certified by the Election Committee) cast shall be necessary for election. If no one is elected, the first ballot shall be considered a nominating ballot. If you have been nominated and wish to remove your name from the ballot you must do so by 6:30 pm that evening.
- **Second Ballot** – once the ballot has been updated with the removal of names from those wishing not to be considered, we will vote again. This vote will occur at the

Thursday evening session. Again, three-fourths of the legal votes cast on the second ballot shall be necessary for election.

- **Third Ballot** - This ballot will be limited to the seven persons who received the greatest number of legal votes on the second ballot. Prior to this ballot we will hold a series of meetings with the Clusters (groups of Conferences) where there will be questions and answers for the candidates. The questions will have been developed prior to the Assembly by the individual conferences at their pre-Assembly meetings. This is why it is important that you participate in these pre-meetings. These question and answer sessions will take place on Friday afternoon. The sessions will be very closely timed and monitored to ensure that each candidate is treated equally and fairly. Following the sessions we will again vote on the seven candidates. Two-thirds of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election.
- **Fourth Ballot** – This ballot will be limited to the three persons who receive the greatest number of legal votes and 60 percent of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. Prior to this vote each of the candidates will address the Assembly. Again, these presentations will be very closely timed and monitored to ensure that each candidate is treated equally and fairly. This process and the vote will occur on Friday evening.
- **Fifth and Subsequent Ballots** – On subsequent ballots, a majority of the legal votes cast will be necessary for election. These ballots shall be limited to the two persons who receive the greatest number of legal votes on the previous ballot. There will be question and answer sessions for the two candidates prior to the votes. The questions will be handled by The Reverend Chris Boerger to ensure that they are fair, applicable and appropriate. These votes will be conducted on Saturday morning.

As you can see, the process is quite well outlined and it has proved to work well in our Synod in previous elections.

So in summary, what do we need from you? First and foremost are your prayers for our Assembly and for this overall process that the Holy Spirit guides and directs us. Second, is participation in the process - understanding how it will work ahead of time and then being part of the Conference pre-Assembly meetings to make sure your voice is heard.

If you have any questions please contact me at [augerjohn76@yahoo.com](mailto:augerjohn76@yahoo.com). Thanks in advance for your prayers and support!

In God's Service,



John Auger  
Synod Vice President

**Section S9.04 of the DE-MD Synod Constitution**

**The bishop shall be elected by the Synod Assembly. There shall be no oral nominations.**

**On the first ballot, three-fourths of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. If no one is elected, the first ballot shall be considered a nominating ballot. Three-fourths of the legal votes cast on the second ballot shall be necessary for election. The third ballot shall be limited to the seven persons (plus ties) who received the greatest number of legal votes on the second ballot, and two-thirds of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. The fourth ballot shall be limited to the three persons (plus ties) who receive the greatest number of legal votes on the third ballot, and 60 percent of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. On subsequent ballots, a majority of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. These ballots shall be limited to the two persons (plus ties) who receive the greatest number of legal votes on the previous ballot.**