

## **Understanding the Role of Our Bishop**

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 help you understand the role of a Bishop. As a voting member we hope it will help you prepare for the election process.

The Bishop has very significant leadership role with a large scope. A summary, based on the DE-MD Synod Constitution (sections S8.10 through S8.16.01 – see bottom of this document), is listed below:

- There are three main areas of responsibility:
  1. Executive function
  2. Pastoral function
  3. Visioning function – to include strategic planning
- As the synod's pastor – to preach, teach and administer the sacraments
- Provide pastoral care and leadership for the synod, its congregations, ordained ministers and other rostered leaders
- Ordain and commission approved candidates for ministry
- Install or provide for installation of pastors of congregations in our synod
- Exercise leadership in the mission of the church – to include leading and fostering commitment to the mission of the church; coordinating the use of resources and promoting the health of the church's life and witness
- Practice leadership in strengthening the unity of the church functioning as the chief ecumenical officer
- Consult regularly with other synodical bishops and the Conference of Bishops
- Oversee and administer the work of the synod which includes:
  - Serving as president of the synod corporation and be the chief executive officer of the synod
  - Preside at all meetings of the Synod Assembly
  - Ensure that the constitution and bylaws of the synod and the church wide organization are duly observed
  - Supervise the work of the other officers
  - Coordinate the work of all synod staff members
  - Provide for the preparation and maintenance of the synodical rosters
  - Provide timely updates to the secretary of the church wide organization on roster changes and transfers
  - Provide for the preparation and maintenance of a register of the congregation in the synod
- Work closely with the Committee (Conference) of Deans

- Appoint a Committee for Ecumenical Relations to coordinate inter-Lutheran and inter faith activities
- Appoint a Synod Attorney to deal with any legal issues
- Appoint and hire assistants to help in the work of the synod consistent with the bylaws

As you can see this is a very extensive list of responsibilities and expectations. As we prepare for the election please prayerfully consider this list.

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

## **Role of the Bishop from the DE-MD Synod Constitution**

- S8.10. Bishop**
- +S8.11. The bishop shall be elected by the Synod Assembly. The bishop shall be a pastor who is an ordained minister of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.**
- +S8.12. As this synod's pastor, the bishop shall be an ordained minister of Word and Sacrament who shall:**
- a. Preach, teach, and administer the sacraments in accord with the Confession of Faith of this church.**
  - b. Have primary responsibility for the ministry of Word and Sacrament in this synod and its congregations, providing pastoral care and leadership for this synod, its congregations, its ordained ministers, and its other rostered leaders.**
  - c. Exercise solely this church's power to ordain (or provide for the ordination by another synodical bishop of) approved candidates who have received and accepted a properly issued, duly attested letter of call for the office of ordained ministry (and as provided in the bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America).**
  - d. Commission (or provide for the commissioning of) approved candidates who have received and accepted a properly issued, duly attested letter of call for service as associates in ministry; consecrate (or provide for the consecration of) approved candidates who have received and accepted a properly issued, duly attested letter of call for service as**

**deaconesses of the ELCA; and consecrate (or provide for the consecration of) approved candidates who have received and accepted a properly issued, duly attested letter of call for service as diaconal ministers of this church.**

- e. Attest letters of call for persons called to serve congregations in the synod, letters of call for persons called by the Synod Council, and letters of call for persons on the rosters of this synod called by the Church Council.**
- f. Install (or provide for the installation of):**
  - 1) the pastors of all congregations of this synod;**
  - 2) ordained ministers called to extra parish service within this synod; and**
  - 3) persons serving in the other rostered ministries within this synod.**
- g. Exercise leadership in the mission of this church and in so doing:**
  - 1) Interpret and advocate the mission and theology of the whole church;**
  - 2) Lead in fostering support for and commitment to the mission of this church within this synod;**
  - 3) Coordinate the use of the resources available to this synod as it seeks to promote the health of this church's life and witness in the areas served by this synod;**
  - 4) Submit a report to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly concerning the synod's life and work; and**
  - 5) Advise and counsel this synod's related institutions and organizations.**
- h. Practice leadership in strengthening the unity of the Church and in so doing:**
  - 1) Exercise oversight of the preaching, teaching, and administration of the sacraments within this synod in accord with the Confession of Faith of this church;**
  - 2) Be responsible for administering the constitutionally established processes for the resolution of controversies and for the discipline of ordained ministers, other rostered leaders, and congregations of this synod;**
  - 3) Be the chief ecumenical officer of this synod;**
  - 4) Consult regularly with other synodical bishops and the Conference of Bishops;**
  - 5) Foster awareness of other churches throughout the Lutheran world communion and, where appropriate, engage in contact with leaders of those churches;**

- 6) Cultivate communion in faith and mission with appropriate Christian judicatory leaders functioning within the territory of this synod; and
  - 7) Be ex-officio a member of the Churchwide Assembly.
- i. Oversee and administer the work of this synod and in so doing:
- 1) Serve as the president of the synod corporation and be the chief executive and administrative officer of this synod, who is authorized and empowered, in the name of this synod, to sign deeds or other instruments and to affix the seal of this synod;
  - 2) Preside at all meetings of the Synod Assembly and provide for the preparation of the agenda for the Synod Assembly, Synod Council, and the council's Executive Committee;
  - 3) Ensure that the constitution and bylaws of the synod and of the churchwide organization are duly observed within this synod, and that the actions of the synod in conformity therewith are carried into effect;
  - 4) Exercise supervision over the work of the other officers;
  - 5) Coordinate the work of all synodical staff members;
  - 6) Appoint all committees for which provision is not otherwise made;
  - 7) Be a member of all committees and any other organizational units of the synod, except as otherwise provided in this constitution;
  - 8) Provide for preparation and maintenance of synodical rosters containing:
    - a. the names and addresses of all ordained ministers of this synod and a record of the calls under which they are serving or the date on which they become retired or disabled; and
    - b. the names and addresses of all other rostered persons of this synod and a record of the positions to which they have been called or the date on which they become retired or disabled;
  - 9) Annually bring to the attention of the Synod Council the names of all rostered persons on leave from call or engaged in approved graduate study in conformity with the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of this church and pursuant to prior action of this synod through the Synod Council;
  - 10) Provide for prompt reporting to the secretary of this church of:
    - a. additions to and subtractions from the rosters of this synod and the register of congregations;
    - b. the issuance of certificates of transfer for rostered persons in good standing who have received and accepted a properly issued, duly attested, regular letter of call under the jurisdiction of another synod; and

**c. the entrance of the names of such persons for whom proper certificates of transfer have been received;**

**11) Provide for preparation and maintenance of a register of the congregations of this synod and the names of the laypersons who have been elected to represent them; and**

**12) Appoint a statistician of the synod who shall secure the parochial reports of the congregations, and make the reports available to the secretary of this church for collation, analysis, and distribution of the statistical summaries to this synod and the other synods of this church.**

- S8.12.01.** The bishop, after consultation with the dean of the conference and the congregation involved shall appoint a pastor who shall be responsible for that congregation during its pastoral vacancy.
- S8.12.02.** The installation of pastors of congregations of the synod shall ordinarily be assigned by the bishop to the deans of the respective conferences.
- S8.12.03.** In order to fulfill the functions of the office, the bishop shall have responsibilities in the following three specific areas:
- a. The Executive function of the office of the bishop shall include the supervision of staff, statistical record keeping for the synod, development of resources for congregations, the Synod Assembly, and communication within the synod.
  - b. The Pastoral function of the office of bishop shall include responsibility for calls, vacancies, placement, Candidacy Committee, interim ministries, coordination and networking within the synod, spiritual development, consultation, discipline, and conflict resolution.
  - c. The Visioning function of the office of the bishop shall include responsibility for strategic planning for the synod, giving leadership to the synod's ministry, and ecumenical leadership.
- S8.12.04.** The bishop shall appoint persons to the Candidacy Committee in compliance with the ELCA Candidacy Manual.
- S8.12.05.** The Committee of Deans shall advise and assist the bishop in the discharge of the duties of the office and confer with the bishop as to the needs of the church in the territory of the several conferences. The committee shall report annually to the Synod Assembly. The committee shall review the roster of ordained ministers, diaconal ministers, and associates in ministry and make appropriate recommendations to the synod regarding those whose status is subject to reconsideration and action under the terms of the constitution and bylaws of this church.
- S8.12.06.** The bishop shall engage such support staff in accord with budgetary guidelines as is required to assist the officers and mission teams of the synod in fulfilling the duties assigned to them. The terms of the position(s) shall be reviewed by the Synod Council.

- S8.12.07.** The bishop shall appoint a Committee for Ecumenical Relations to coordinate ecumenical, inter-Lutheran, and interfaith activities of this synod; to monitor the programs, policies, and budgets of all ecumenical agencies on the territory of this synod with which this synod works and cooperates; to recommend to the Budget Development Committee the financial support of this synod to the work of such ecumenical agencies; and, to initiate programs which will encourage the pastors and congregations of this synod to be actively involved in ecumenical activities both in study and action.
- †S8.13.** The synodical bishop may appoint an attorney, admitted to the bar within the territory of the synod or the state where the synod is located, to be Synod Attorney. The appointment must be approved by the Synod Council and reported to the Synod Assembly and to the ELCA secretary. The appointment continues until resignation or until a successor is appointed. The Synod Attorney provides legal advice and counsel to the synodical officers and the Synod Council. The Synod Attorney is expected to be familiar with the governing documents and policies of the synod and, as necessary, to attend meetings of the Synod Council. The Synod Attorney serves without salary but may be retained and compensated for specific legal services requested by the synod.
- S8.14. The bishop may have such assistants as provided for in the bylaws.**
- S8.14.01.** The bishop shall nominate assistants to the bishop who shall be elected by the Synod Council and, if clergy or rostered lay persons, called by the Synod Council. Their terms shall run concurrently with that of the bishop. They shall have those duties assigned by the bishop and shall be supervised by the bishop or the bishop's designee.
- S8.14.02.** At the discretion of the bishop, the assistants to the bishop may be delegated as representatives of the Office of the Bishop to perform any particular function of the bishop's office except those that must be carried out by the bishop under this constitution and the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- +S8.15. The presiding bishop of this church, or the appointee of the presiding bishop, shall install into office, in accord with the policy and approved rite of this church, each newly elected synodical bishop.**
- +S8.16 Conflicts of Interest**
- +S8.16.01. The following procedures shall govern matters of potential conflicts of interest for synodical bishops:**
- a. Whenever a synodical bishop determines that a matter of the kind described in +S8.16.01.b. may require his or her determination or action with respect to a related individual as defined in +S8.16.01.c. the synodical bishop shall withdraw from personal involvement in such matter and shall so notify the presiding bishop. The presiding bishop shall then appoint another synodical bishop from the same region to handle the matter to conclusion. In dealing with such matter, the appointed bishop shall exercise all of the functions and authority to the**

same extent as if the appointed bishop were the elected bishop of the withdrawing bishop's synod.

- b. Matters include any proceedings under Chapter 20, proceedings under provision 7.46. of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* (+S14.13.), candidacy, reinstatement, and similar matters where determinations or actions by the synodical bishop could change, limit, restrict, approve, authorize, or deny the related individual's ministry on one of the official rosters of this church.
- c. A related individual is one who, with respect to the synodical bishop, is a spouse, parent, son, daughter, sibling, uncle, aunt, niece, nephew, grandparent, grandchild, including corresponding members of blended families and or in-laws (parent, son, daughter, or sibling of a spouse, spouse of a sibling, or the parent or sibling of the spouse of a sibling).