

# WHAT MATTERS . . . . . August 18, 2018 . . .



*Special Edition – Festival Worship and Installation of Bishop Viviane Thomas-Breitfeld*



If you were looking for a worship experience that looked and felt like the kingdom of God had come as God intended, you would have found it at the bishop's installation. The Reverend Viviane Elise Thomas-Breitfeld was installed as Bishop of the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin on Saturday, August 18 at First Lutheran Church in Janesville.

Gathering around the theme of social justice based on scripture text found in Micah 6:8—"To do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God," were friends and family members, members of our synod's worshipping communities, hundreds of interfaith and ecumenical leaders including pastors and deacons of the synod, former synod bishops including the Rev. Mary Froiland and the Rev. Jon Enslin as well as ELCA Region 5 bishops, ELCA ministry partners, and pastors with connections to Bishop Thomas-Breitfeld from Florida, Seattle, Philadelphia, Puerto Rico, the UP, California, New York, Minneapolis, Chicago and Milwaukee. Most notable was the attendance of Bishop Patricia Davenport, also of African descent, who was elected as Bishop of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod the same weekend of May 5 & 6 as Bishop Thomas-Breitfeld.

Together, they represent the first two female clergy of African-

Descent to be elected as bishops in the ELCA. Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton presided and preached.

There are not enough superlatives to describe the beautiful music throughout the worship celebration. Under the direction of Ben Johnston-Urey, Music Director for First Lutheran Church (Janesville), music created space to experience God from prelude to sending. Our hearts were lifted by cantor, Rev. Felix Malpica of Faith Lutheran Church (Janesville), music from Spoken Word Artists, David Scherer and Joe Davis (Minneapolis, MN), the Gospel Choir from Cross Lutheran and All People's Lutheran (Milwaukee) led by Judy Ellwanger, an Organ Prelude played by David Frank, a Brass Ensemble led by Ben Johnston-Urey, a children's choir led by Carrie Enstad, and a youth soloist, Eleanor Norquay with a sweet, beautiful voice that brought some in the assembly to tears, accompanied by Cherie Norquay of Faith Lutheran Church (Janesville).



Bishop Eaton started her sermon celebrating that all six of our new bishops are women, noting that for some, we've waited a long time for this and for the election of African-descent female bishops. Bishop Eaton was met with applause from the assembly when she congratulated us, "So well done South-Central Synod of Wisconsin." Always telling it like it is, Bishop Eaton recognized that, "Today is a day of great joy and also a day that is bittersweet, because right now in Janesville, Wisconsin, this congregation looks like the diversity and beauty of creation that God intended, but next week this congregation will look different." And while the realization that this particular actuation of God's kingdom might be ephemeral for now, it gave us hope of what our congregations can look like in the future. Bishop Eaton further shared, "It is possible for the ELCA to reflect what this country is becoming but not without God's help." She

compelled us to consider that this is not an event, it is a holy fulfilling of a call that God places on all of God's people that is marked on our foreheads at our baptisms that makes it possible for us in difficult situations to say

'No, I have a vision. God has a vision for what the church and the world can be like.'" But we can't do it alone. John's gospel text for the day, John 15: 1-17, reminded us that Jesus is the true vine and we are the branches. It takes all of us working together to bear fruit that will last.



As the branches of the vine, we worked together to install our new shepherd. Synod Vice-President Jane Cahill Wolfgram presented Rev. Thomas-Breitfeld for installation into the Office of Bishop after which Presiding Bishop Eaton addressed her. The Synod Children & Youth Choir sang sweetly Veni Sancte Spiritus during the laying on of hands by the visiting bishops. Former bishop, the Rev. Mary Froiland presented the bishop's cross, pointing out the literal and symbolic weight of the cross worn by a bishop. "Receive this cross and wear it, as a sign of your calling to serve Christ and his people, and as an emblem of the office to which you have been elected." Next, she presented the crozier, "Receive this crozier, as a sign of your calling to be a good shepherd who knows her sheep and whose sheep know her."

There's joy in recognizing that we aren't alone. The highlight of the installation service for many was the energy and joy and palpable love during the singing of "I Need You to Survive." The gospel choir started singing it, Bishop Thomas-Breitfeld spontaneously added hand movements to the words and the assembly stood and made a joyful noise!

***"I pray for you, you pray for me.  
I love you. I need you to survive.  
I won't hurt you  
with words from my mouth.  
I love you, I need you to survive."***

We are grateful to the staff and volunteers of First Lutheran Church in Janesville for serving on the planning team, for all the support volunteers provided and for your most gracious hospitality. Your staff and members are simply amazing! We also thank the synod council and synod staff, the ELCA churchwide staff in particular Kevin Strickland, Assistant to the Presiding Bishop/Executive for Worship and Rev. Dr. Wyvetta Bullock, Assistant to the Presiding Bishop/Executive for Administration, visiting clergy, the musicians and choirs, assisting minister and Diakonia graduate, Ken Harris, lectors Leota Thomas-Breitfeld Coyne and Sean Thomas-Breitfeld, daughter and son of Bishop Viviane and Pastor Fred Thomas-Breitfeld, intercessors, audio visual & streaming team, sign interpreter, Tim Mumm, ushers, counters, greeters and hosts, photographers, social media team, parking attendants, communion ministers, crucifer, book bearer, acolytes, streamers, banner carriers, nursery helpers and members of our congregations for your attendance. If you would like to see the names of all participants, stop by the synod office for a commemorative program or visit the synod website for a digital copy of the worship folder. [www.scsw-elca.org](http://www.scsw-elca.org)



Special thanks to the Installation Planning Team who did a phenomenal job in working together using the gifts God has given you to make Christ at the center of this holy fulfilling of Bishop Thomas-Breitfeld's call as bishop. Worship Team: Bishop Thomas-Breitfeld, Rev. Mae Jean Zelle, Ben Johnston-Urey, Rev. Felix Malpica, Rev. Stephen Marsh, and David Frank; and Celebration Planning Team: Rolfe Nervig (Chair), Jeanie Pomplun, Jane Cahill-Wolfgram, Carolyn Butts, Deacon Vicki Hanrahan, Rev. Mae Jean Zelle, and Ben Johnston-Urey. We also thank the worship and communications teams of the ELCA for sharing your invaluable expertise both in person and print to help us plan a successful festival worship.

A big thank you to our sponsors of the receptions and installation expenses: the congregations of the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin, Mission Investment Fund, Church Mutual and Portico Benefit Services. We could not have done this without your support!

An offering was taken that will be gratefully received and shared equally by the Fund for Children's Education Ministries of our partner the Caribbean Synod of the ELCA and the ELCA Fund for Leaders as part of the Campaign for the ELCA. As we are still accepting donations, a total for the offering will be provided in a future issue of **What Matters**. If you wish to make a donation to these two ministries, you may send a donation to the synod office by texting **GIVE** to **(608) 571-1576** or by sending a check made payable to the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin with "Installation Offering" in the memo.

If you missed the installation or want to experience it again, you will find the recording of the live streaming on the synod's Youtube page: South-Central Synod of Wisconsin Bishop Installation 2018.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AbiWt8EnkuA&t=3180s>

Visit the synod's Facebook page for photos and for future albums of photos that we will be posting over the next week.

Visit the Bishop's Installation page on the synod website for a full biography of our bishop and the worship folder. [www.scsw-elca.org](http://www.scsw-elca.org)

