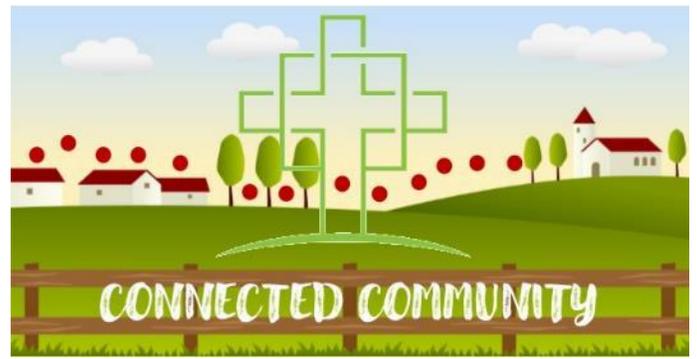


WHAT MATTERS Connected Community Special Edition . . . May 14, 2020



*Curated resources for this time of the pandemic
Special Focus this Week on Bishop Election
and Returning to In-Person Worship*

South-Central Synod of Wisconsin, ELCA/6401 Odana Rd./Suite 20/Madison, WI 53719/(608) 270-0201/www.scsw-elca.org



**BISHOP NOMINEES TO BE ANNOUNCED
FRIDAY, MAY 15, 2020 - AT 4:00 PM!**

At long last, the day we have been waiting for! The 2020 Bishop Election Nominees will be announced at 4:00 pm tomorrow, May 15.

The Call Committee has prepared the following report of its work. We highly encourage you to read it before 4:00 tomorrow when the Nominees will be announced.

**The Calling of a Bishop:
A Report to the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin
by the
Bishop Call Committee
May 11th, 2020**

The following is the final report of the Bishop Call Committee of 2020.

Members of this committee include: Peter Antonie, Lay member of Vermont Lutheran in Black Earth; Rich Dyanchand, Lay member of Christ in Lancaster; Pastor Don Glanzer of St. Peter's, Loganville; Dan Ruge, Lay member of Luther Memorial, Madison; Pastor Holly Slater of St. Paul's Liberty, Deerfield; Pastor Jerry Tews, Retired of St. John's, Evansville; Pastor Emily Tveite of Lutheran Campus Ministry; and co-chairs, Helen Sheahan of Good Shepard, Madison and Cindy Wuttke of Christ in Sharon.

Just as call committees in your congregation give a report as to how they came to their conclusions, we think it's important to do the same.

The process that will culminate when we elect a new bishop first began to take shape over two years ago, when the synod council, following the election in 2018, thought it would be good to appoint a group to think about our election process – never thinking, of course, that we would be doing it again this soon. But a Bishop Election Task Force was appointed in June of 2018 to review how elections are done and make recommendations about improving the process. They reported their work at the September 2019 Synod Council meeting, just after the council had learned that we would be holding an election in 2020. Pastor Tim Hansen, from Our Savior's in Sun Prairie, chaired the group of 7 persons including: Jane Cahill Wolfgram, Synod Vice President, from Christ in DeForest; Carolyn Butts, Synod Council member from St. John's in Evansville; Pastor Felix Malpica, from Faith in Janesville, Pastor Brenda Lovick, from East Koshkonong in Cambridge; Pastor Sue Beadle, from Christ in DeForest; and Pastor Steve Kottke, Assistant to the Bishop for Leadership Support. A key piece of their report was to encourage a process that would both be broadly participatory and would include the ability to look more carefully into the past experience of potential candidates.

The Synod Council, Executive Committee, Election Task Force, and newly-appointed Bishop Peter Rogness continued conversations throughout the synod, including Bishop Rogness' meetings with leaders in all 12 conferences during the fall of 2019. In January of this year, the Synod Council approved the process that is now reaching its culmination, and appointed us, a nine-person Call Committee, a mix of lay and clergy, from all around the synod. We first met in January, just after our appointment, to lay out a work plan for the task before us.

In January and February, six Town Hall meetings were held around the synod, involving over 300 people in structured conversations describing the synod and the qualities needed in a bishop. A listening and writing team of five persons including— Pastor Dick Inglett, from Sugar Creek in Elkhorn; Mary DeYoung, past Synod Secretary, from Christ in Sharon; Pastor George Carlson, Retired Rostered Leader; Pastor Dan Feaster, from the Samaritan Counseling Center; and Ken Streit, layperson from Advent in Madison – attended each one, taking down the input from group discussions, and shaping it into two concise profile documents: one that described our synod, and one that described the bishop we seek.

Those profiles were the basis for the Nominating Caucuses that were held by all 12 Conferences in our synod in February and March. Each conference could nominate up to five persons for consideration as bishop for a potential of 60 nominees.

There ended up being 52 nominations - although 11 were nominated by two or more conferences resulting in a total of 33 individuals who were nominated. In that initial group of 33, there were 23 males, 10 females, 20 from inside our synod and 13 from outside with diverse inclusivity of race, gender, and identity. Each nominee had until March 10th to discern whether or not to be available to participate in the process.

Fifteen of the nominees chose not to move forward with the process – 13 males and 2 females declined; 10 were from inside our synod and 5 from outside, and two of three persons of color declined. That left us with 18 candidates to consider as we did our work.

Now, the ball was fully in our court to do what call committees do – contact references, review materials submitted by the candidates, and conduct interviews. We have done all of that, and we have been careful to maintain confidentiality throughout the entire process. We can now be more forthcoming about just how we went about our work.

We have met together 14 times, most of them 3-hour meetings, 3 in-person and the rest via Zoom. Over 800 emails have been exchanged. Subgroups of three, or triads, were created and met a number of times to prepare, interview, and debrief assignments. Each committee member was assigned to be a contact for 2 candidates which involved multiple emails and phone calls to guide each candidate through the process. Overall, this process has been described by committee members as intensive, thorough, rewarding, and fun!

Each of the 18 candidates submitted a 12-page "Bishop Candidate Profile" that was adapted from the Rostered minister profile that many of you are familiar with. We developed a "rubric" – a lens through which we would read the profiles and rate each candidate with an eye toward how well they seemed to match with the bishop profile that had emerged from the Town Hall meetings.

Each candidate's profile asked for 5 references. Every reference was called - five for each candidate times 18 candidates means 90 reference calls were made, many of them lengthy. We also developed a tabulation sheet for rating those reference calls. We determined that no one would be eliminated on the basis of paper and references only- we would interview all 18. Each of our triads conducted individual 45-minute interviews with six of the 18 candidates.

After those first interviews, the whole committee came back together to hear reports from each triad and to begin the process of winnowing toward the final "4-6" candidates which was our charge. We compiled our thoughts and ratings; we discussed racial equity and diversity, and it became very clear that we had before us a group of very fine pastors, skilled and dedicated. We knew this would be hard, but in a very good way! At the end of this session we decided we would invite nine candidates back for a second interview with the entire committee. Those interviews were completed over three days near the end of April.

Then came the very difficult discussion to come to our decision. We observed several times that though we had used rating systems for discussion and comparison, giving this a bit of feel of a science, it was also just as

much an art form. In the end, it often came to intangibles. Maybe, we thought, that is how the Holy Spirit works. Do your best work, then pay attention to which way the spirit seems to be blowing in your midst.

And, perhaps one of our committee members said it best as we were deliberating over these final nine when she said, "I want every one of the people we put forward to be someone I could be very excited to vote for!"

In the end we feel we've accomplished this. These are the candidates who excited us the most. Make no mistake – all the other candidates are also very gifted, fine leaders. The candidates we are recommending seemed the strongest - Different in experience and style and gifts; but all with demonstrated gifts for leadership in the church. It should be noted that after we made our final decision, one male candidate did withdraw. The world has changed since he initially agreed to go forward in the process, and he feels his call is to stay in his current ministry.

When this announcement is done, you will find on our synod's website two pieces on each candidate that will help you begin to know them better:

- a) Each has been asked to prepare a five-minute video to introduce themselves. Had we been in assembly on May 1 you would have heard them in person, but you know what has happened to that plan!
- b) We are also posting written material from their submitted Bishop Candidate Profile for your review.

On May 22 at 11:00 a.m. the Bishop Election Task Force will post a 90-minute forum, asking questions drawn from our bishop profile. In June, another forum will be held, this time with questions you are invited to submit to the Task Force.

The date of our Assembly and election will be announced once we know when we will be able to gather in a multi-site format.

Before we announce the candidates for Bishop of the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin, we would like to thank the Bishop Election Task Force, the Synod Executive committee and Synod Council for recommending us for this committee; each of the 33 nominees and 18 candidates; the synod office staff of Deacon Vicki Hanrahan for coaching us on Zoom interviews; Robyn Zimmerman for being our tech support and scheduling our meetings as well as helping us with Dropbox; and Bishop Peter Rogness for being our guide and gentle centering presence. Finally, thank you for listening. It has been our privilege to do this work.

The names of the nominees for bishop, introductory videos, and written biographical information will be available on the synod website at 4:00 p.m. (CT) on Friday, May 15, 2020:

<https://scsw-elca.org/2020bishopelection/>

God's blessings to each of them as they move forward on this journey.

Respectfully submitted,
The Bishop Call Committee of 2020

- Tomorrow they will announce the 4-6 nominees they have been charged with bringing forward to the congregations. At the conclusion of that report and within minutes, several things will also be posted to the Synod Website:

<https://scsw-elca.org/2020bishopelection/>

- The above text of the report given by the committee;
- a five-minute introductory video from each of the nominees;
- written material produced by each of the nominees with their education and work history, and their responses to questions posed by the Bishop Candidate Profile they completed for the Call Committee.

What Happens Next?

- The Bishop Election Task Force will conduct two on-line forums with the nominees. The first will be posted at 11:00 a.m. Friday, May 22. The Task Force will focus the questions for the first forum on issues raised by the Synod Profile and Bishop Profile that came out of the January-February Town Hall Meetings. People from around the synod will be invited to submit questions for a second forum, to be held a month or so later.
- Please be aware that in the interest of having a fair and even process, the Task Force discourages people from the synod having other communications with any of the nominees apart from the public interactions available to all.
- At the Assembly (**[see specific information here](#)**), there will be a series of three ballots, with speeches or Q&A before each. ELCA Secretary Sue Rothmeyer or an appointee will run the election.



RESPONSE TO YESTERDAY'S SUPREME COURT DECISION

May 14, 2020

We are in the Easter season, which means we proclaim Christ risen and among us still, no matter the circumstance!

This morning the six ELCA bishops in Wisconsin conferred regarding the possible confusion in our congregations as a result of yesterday's ruling by the state Supreme Court. Here is the brief letter we agreed to send to our congregations in this state. Our emphasis is to note that the decision was based on a contested legal issue regarding Secretary Andrea Palm's authority and does not indicate any change in the cautions and guidelines about our life during a pandemic.

- As you continue to consider decisions about when and how to regather, please study carefully the guidance we have at hand. I suggest you have decisionmakers read and discuss several helpful

pieces:

- Earlier this week the ELCA published updates guidelines, mentioned in the letter. Link: https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/returning-to%20In-person-worship.pdf?_ga=2.71580436.661164875.1589462851-1842824070.1553531065
- Also earlier this week, Bishop Paul Erickson in our neighboring Greater Milwaukee Synod published a letter with concise and helpful guidance, also citing other pieces worth your attention. Link: <https://milwaukee-synod.org/coronavirus-covid-19-resources-information/>
- The video of Epidemiologist Michael Osterholm's interview with Minneapolis Area Synod Bishop Ann Svennungsen is 30 minutes of highly informative conversation for church leaders. Link: <https://www.facebook.com/mpslsynod/videos/619998971928161/>

Thank you for your partnership in stewarding the life of God's church in this place.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter Rogness". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Peter Rogness, Bishop
South-Central Synod of Wisconsin



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

May 14, 2020

Pastoral Message regarding the WI Supreme Court Ruling Safer at Home Ruling from Six Bishops

Bishop Jim Arends, Bishop Paul Erickson, Bishop Katherine Finegan, Bishop Gerald Mansholt,
Bishop Laurie Skow-Anderson, Bishop Peter Rogness

Dear friends in Christ,

On May 13, 2020, the Wisconsin Supreme Court lifted the Wisconsin Department of Health Services' Safer at Home extension. However, nothing has changed in our level of concern about contracting and spreading the coronavirus via worship and other gatherings in our churches.

The court decision was based on a contested legal point, and not on any change of the need for caution and safety that the pandemic has brought upon us. Counsel from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, a wide range of additional medical experts, the ELCA's guidelines, and other government entities continue to stress the need for restricting all gatherings to under ten people and attendant safeguards such as distancing, masks, etc.

In the midst of confusion after the court's ruling, we ask that you remain steadfast in taking precautions to not contract or spread the virus. Please follow the counsel and recommendations stated in the May 12, 2020 ELCA document, Considerations for Returning to In-person Worship.

We in the Church need to continue to be guided by scripture, our theology, and the best scientific knowledge we can gather. We stand in unity to prioritize the safety and the well-being of all of our members as we continue in community.

Yours in Christ,

Bishop James Arends
La Crosse Area Synod

Bishop Gerald Mansholt
East Central Synod of Wisconsin

Bishop Paul Erickson
Greater Milwaukee Synod

Bishop Laurie Skow-Anderson
Northwest Synod of Wisconsin

Bishop Katherine Finegan
Northern Great Lakes Synod

Bishop Peter Rogness
South-Central Synod of Wisconsin



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Considerations for Returning to In-person Worship
Being Church Together During the COVID-19 Pandemic
Updated May 12, 2020

NEW ELCA RESOURCE “RETURNING TO WORSHIP”

You will find it here: <https://scsw-elca.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/ELCAInPersonWorship.pdf>

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Tuesdays with the Bishop

**Bishop Rogness Invites You to
Weekly Conversations During this
Pandemic**



As our situations are ever-changing, we know new questions come up every week. Rostered Ministers have expressed interest in a weekly opportunity for conversation. Bishop Rogness has set aside this time for you to bring your questions and concerns so that we can have conversation and learn from each other.

Future Webinars for Pastors, Deacons and Lay Leaders:

- **Tonight - Thursday, May 14, 7:00-8:00 p.m.**
- **Each Tuesday beginning May 26, 2:00 p.m.**

To Register:

Email Robyn at robbynz@scsw-elca.org and she will send you the link to participate in the Zoom meeting.

We will be framing our conversation in a similar fashion as one we attended from the NW Lower Michigan Synod led by Bishop Craig Satterlee.

- 1) Who are we going to listen to?
- 2) What plans are you making as we wait?
- 3) What will life be like when we return?
- 4) Long-term implications

Send Questions in Advance:

We invite you to send your questions in advance and we will address those first. Please email those to Deacon Vicki Hanrahan at vickih@scsw-elca.org by end of the day Monday.

We will also address live questions as you may think of them during our discussion.



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

*For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body,
though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. —1 Corinthians 12:12*

May 13, 2020

Dear church,

Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

During the uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic, I am encouraged by your resilience and creativity in our witness to the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. I am also inspired by your generosity. Through the [ELCA COVID-19 Response Fund](#) and our [Daily Bread grants](#), we are providing critical support to struggling yet vital ministries across this church. Through [Lutheran Disaster Response International](#) we have intensified our accompaniment of global partners. *We are church together.*

This is a trying time for us all. At the same time, we know that a disproportionate burden of illness, death, discrimination and harassment falls on communities of color. This pandemic has exacerbated racism and racial inequities deeply entrenched in society and across the church. We see this in the growing anti-Asian racism and the disproportionate number of deaths in black, American Indian and Latinx communities. I have been learning from the leaders of the ELCA's [ethnic associations](#) how the [data](#) we see on the news is experienced in real life. I have listened to leaders of color share the impact of this pandemic on their communities — on their lives and on their ministries. These stories are difficult but important, so we are launching a special series on [LivingLutheran.org](#) to lift up these voices for us all to hear. We also seek to ensure that our COVID-19 response more effectively tends to the realities of racism and racial inequality. *We are church together.*

Recently, in cities across this country, we have seen horrifying anti-Semitic and white supremacist messages displayed during public protests against government orders that are intended to protect lives. No matter our politics or opinions about our elected leaders and their policies, all of us must come together on the basis of our church's commitments to condemn [racism](#) against indigenous people and people of color, [white supremacy](#), [sexism](#), and [anti-Semitism](#) whenever they occur. Whether our churches and communities are racially diverse or predominantly white, our work for racial and economic justice for all people is work for all of us. *We are church together.*

Just as God has joined us to the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ in baptism, we are joined to each other. Paul helps us to understand this by speaking of the one body of Christ, with many members. While this is always true, perhaps we feel it more acutely in this time of physical distancing. In our longing to be church together, let us be even more intentional in sharing with each other, easing each other's burdens, consoling each other in our fear and grief, condemning what is contrary to the gospel and living out our baptismal covenant "to strive for justice and peace in all the earth."

In partnership,

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton

Presiding Bishop, ELCA

To learn more, visit:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: “COVID-19 in Racial and Ethnic Minority Groups”
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/racial-ethnic-minorities.html>

ELCA social statement “Freed in Christ: Race, Ethnicity, and Culture”
<http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/RaceSS.pdf>

“Explanation of the Declaration of the ELCA to People of African Descent”
https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Slavery_Apology_Explanation.pdf?_ga=2.192539306.1607846328.1589383529-706161550.1552512868

ELCA social policy resolution “Condemnation of White Supremacy and Racist Rhetoric”
https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Condemnation_of_White_Supremacy_and_Racist_Rhetoric.pdf

ELCA social statement “Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action”
<https://www.elca.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society/Current-Social-Writing-Projects/Women-and-Justice>

“Declaration of the ELCA to Jewish Community”
https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Declaration_of_The_ELCA_To_The_Jewish_Community.pdf?_ga=2.71932119.591108520.1588614831-706161550.1552512868

<https://elca.org/News-and-Events/8037>

Lutheran World Federation Invites You to A Day of Prayer Today

COVID-19: United in Prayer for Humanity

<https://bit.ly/LWFUnitedinPrayer>



1 Timothy 4:13-16 - Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching. Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through prophecy when the body of elders laid their hands on you. Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress. Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.



Synod Prayer Team Devoted to Supporting our Rostered Ministers

In a spirit of love and care for one another, a Synod Prayer Team has been created to offer prayer for those times when a rostered minister would like either themselves or their loved ones to be lifted in prayer. We are the body of Christ together, and enfolding one another in prayer is a comforting and sustaining expression of this body.

If you would like the prayer team to pray for you, fill out the prayer request form and submit. The prayer request will reach the team without delay! **Prayer requests remain confidential and are not shared outside of the prayer team, unless you desire that and give us permission. The prayer request form will ask for this information.**

You may submit your prayer request using our online form: <https://scsw-elca.org/prayer/>

The members of the Synod Prayer Team are:

Deacon Judy Nolde (co-chair), Diane Padrutt (co-chair), Rev. Amy Waelchli, Rev. Nancy Raabe, Rev. Lisa Nelson, Deacon Meg Nielsen, Bishop Peter Rogness, Deacon Vicki Hanrahan, and Rev. Ken Smith.

These are especially challenging and trying times. Please do not hesitate to ask for our prayers. It is our privilege to pray for you.

+ In Memoriam +

Rev. Brent D. Christianson

September 12, 1951 – May 13, 2020
Campus Pastor & Director 1993 – 2014



It is with great sadness that we inform you of the death of Pastor Brent Christianson, who faithfully served as Campus Pastor and Director at Lutheran Campus Ministry in Madison from 1993 to 2014.

Pastor Brent is remembered by students as a gifted preacher and mentor, one happy to sit down for a long chat, a lover of the Boundary Waters, and a creator of soup and community. He was a valued colleague and advocate for Campus Ministry in the ELCA. Pastor Brent was also a lifelong poet who published seven books, including “Good Grief” a 52-week devotional for those experiencing illness, loss, or other life transitions.

After being diagnosed with prostate cancer, Pastor Brent retired in 2014 and later moved with his wife Becky to Northfield, Minnesota. We surround Becky and all of Pastor Brent’s family and friends with prayer in this time of grief.

In the coming weeks and months, we would like to gather stories and photos from Pastor Brent’s ministry at UW-Madison. You can contribute to this effort by going to <https://form.jotform.com/201343272758051>.

Into your hands, O merciful Savior, we commend your servant Brent. Receive him into the arms of your mercy, into the blessed rest of everlasting peace, and into the glorious company of the saints in light. Amen

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SYNOD WEBSITE IS UPDATED DAILY

Our resource lists continue to grow each day (sometimes multiple times a day) during this crisis.

Communication and Health Resources: <https://scsw-elca.org/healthresources/>

Official ELCA and synod related communications can be found here.

Ideas for Ways to Stay Connected With Your Community: <https://scsw-elca.org/community/>

Curated resources for being in community during this time of physical distancing. Bishop Rogness' weekly video can be found here.

Wartburg Theological Seminary

YOU'RE INVITED

***Class of 2020
Commencement***

**SUNDAY MAY 17, 2020
3:00pm CST**

A REAL-TIME DIGITAL CELEBRATION

RSVP to communication@wartburgseminary.edu
by May 13 for details on how to access this special
Commencement service.

