



Bishop Candidacy Profile

Naomi Garber

PART I. PERSONAL INFORMATION

Language Proficiencies

English

Educational History.

M.Div Luther Seminary; 2000

BA, Long Term Care Administration & Healthcare Financial Management,
Concordia College Moorhead MN; 1981



Life-Long Learning Experiences

2019	Strengthening the Soul of Leadership; 20 contact hours
2018-2019	Intentional Interim Training; 79 contact hours
2018	ELCA Stewardship Event; 20 contact hours
2017	Transforming Center Leadership Retreat; 30 contact hours
2010-2012	D. Min. Congregational Mission and Leadership; 2 years

Work History

2019-2020	First English Lutheran Church, Platteville WI; Intentional Interim Pastor
2017-2019	All Saints Lutheran Church, Fitchburg; Intentional Interim Pastor
2016-2017	St. John's Lutheran Church, Richland Center; Interim Pastor
2009-2016	First Lutheran Church, Janesville; Pastor for Administration & Worship
2002-2008	Eastern North Dakota Synod, Associate with the Bishop,

Describe your current Congregation, organization, or agency as to its purpose, size, and relationship to the large church.

I am currently the Intentional Interim pastor at First English Lutheran Church in Platteville, Wisconsin. First English is a mid-size congregation whose identified mission is to serve the University Wisconsin-Platteville through Campus Ministry, the local community through service projects, and the world through Lutheran World Relief and Global Health Ministry. The congregation has two worship services each Sunday with a combined attendance average of 140. The congregation also has a long history with Wartburg Seminary serving as an internship site. The current intern is the tenth intern at First English. The congregation is accustomed to change through the interns who have learned and served the congregation and the university community with the comings and goings of students, facility, staff, and administration. Therefore, First English is unusual in their capacity and acceptance of change. There is a high expectation of excellence while experiencing the new.

PART II. SAMPLES OF COMPETENCIES

- Innovation / Creativity

I use questions---I wonder and I notice---to encourage and invite conversation. I think about what can be and I listen carefully. I have learned we make significant changes "for a season" and then reflect upon whether they should be permanent changes. I love people who have ideas and do what I can to support them. Being in a new congregation every 10 to 18 months means I see the breadth of variety of how God's mission is lived out in the world. I carry "good" ideas from place to place without the need for recognition or accolades for the idea.

- Participant in the Larger Church

I know it is so very easy to become focused on what is happening locally, blind to the needs of the world. I encourage participation through financial support of Lutheran Disaster Response, Lutheran World Relief and Global Health Ministries (kits and quilts) and Lutheran World Hunger activities. Also, in my current context, the congregation is active in the Pastoral Internship program, preparing pastors for the whole church. Also, I thoroughly enjoyed teaching a course in the Synod's Diakonia program. I was privileged to be a part of the development and introduction of the ELW.

- Pastoral Care

I am amazed and humbled by the Holy Ground I am invited to walk with people. I listen carefully to their stories and questions. Often, my presence is more valuable than the words I can say. In moments of crisis or uncertainty, the knowledge that we are not alone is precious and comforting. I can sit in the valley alongside people walking with them to a new way of life. I believe everyone is part of God's very good creation. I am often called up to be with non-church families at a time of a death thanking God for them and placing them into God's care and keeping for all eternity.

- Inter-personal Climate

It is incumbent upon a leader to create an environment which is safe for people to share their celebrations and challenges. An environment in which both laughter and tears are

welcome is important to me. I want to know people's passions, skills, and interests and what they need to be productive, participating team members. I am a trained by Peter Steinke as a facilitator with Healthy Congregations. We are all connected. If one part is having a difficult time or making an adjustment, we are all in a state of flex. The leader provides the stability of the team.

- Social Ministry

One of my favorite ministry activities is traveling with youth and adults on service trips. I am rather particular about the "work" the participants will be engaging in with a preference for physical work. I have been a leader on trips for flood recovery, building houses, tornado recovery, and teaching and community outreach. I also facilitated Second Harvest Monthly Mobile Food Bank to begin within a congregation. In other words, I am a "hands-on" social ministry pastor.

PART III: REFLECTIONS ON MINISTRY

- Calling *You are called as a Child of God and into rostered service in this church. Reflect theologically on your sense of call as you consider serving as Bishop of the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin.*

God is a God of surprises! I could never have imagined all the varied ways in which God has equipped me to serve God's mission in the world. How could God possibly need this broken, sinful woman to be in such a wide variety of ministry settings? I have been uniquely shaped, formed, and prepared to serve in synodical ministry. In this Synod, I have served in small, medium, and large communities. I have had positions on a wide variety of synodical committees. I have had calls in large and medium sized congregations including specialized ministries-campus ministry and chaplain on a burn unit. In addition, I served as Associate with the Bishop in a primarily rural synod which also had some of the largest congregations in the ELGA I certainly don't know everything I will encounter, but I am prepared initially for some of the congregational and pastoral challenges with which the Office of Bishop is involved. I bring with me a wide variety of administrative experiences.

- Convictions *Identify the three most prominent themes that others would say are strongly evident in your speaking, teaching, leading, and living.*

#1 We are saved by grace through faith as THE gift of God. We serve the world because of the 1 grace of God showers upon us. We live together in community as God's people because of God's ! grace. (Ephesians 2)

#2 God always moves first, always. (Genesis 1, John 1, Revelation 21)

#3 Nothing, nothing, nothing can separate us from the love of God through Christ Jesus. (Psalm 139 and Romans 8)

- **Context** *Describe what brings you energy as you consider the role of Bishop and how this might be a best use of your gifts, skills, and passions.*

I love God's people. I am interested in their lives and stories. As I travel around as an Intentional Interim pastor, I truly enjoy being with each congregation as we are together for a season---sometimes it is a short season sometimes not, sometimes it is springtime sometimes winter.. -living together as we discover what God is calling each of us to do and be. The joy of the discovery is pure delight I enjoy the partnership of learning about faith and life and God together. The Gospel gives us great freedom to live as disciples of Jesus in a world that can be dark, cruel, and fear-filled. When we learn how our individual skills and abilities, talents and passions, strengths and personalities are important to God and God's mission, then God's transformational power takes root and we are a part of God's healing of the world.

- **Accomplishments** *How has your current ministry setting developed in the last three years, and in what ways have you contributed to this growth or development? Are there other accomplishments or engagements that are formative in your discernment process for this call?*

The last three years have been years of incredible growth and development for me.

I was deeply wounded and was questioning my call to ministry. I give thanks for God's people of St. John's, Richland Center who loved me into health and wellbeing, affirming my call to ordained ministry. I sensed I had the ability to assess situations quickly, now I know this to be true with each interim call. Just what is going on here, who does what, how is God at work here in this place are all questions I ask as I enter a congregation. I listen both to words and actions. I watch interactions. I learn what is special about this place and then work to prepare the congregation for their "new" pastor. I work hard and make difficult decisions which means I'm not always popular despite the necessity of the decisions.

- **Denominational Relationship** *What are your hopes for the ELCA? Describe how you help others understand their relationship to the synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.*

I am very hopeful for the ELCA. I believe we have theological understandings and gifts the world needs. Our understanding of grace. Our conviction in the priesthood of all believers. We are centered in the Gospel of Jesus Christ which gives us freedom to share the good news with all those we encounter. We are so much better together than we are apart. Our polity of being congregationally based means ministry is contextual which allows for incredible creativity and ingenuity.

- **Public Ministry** *In the public role of Bishop, how would you describe your preferred approach, style, and manner?*

I am most comfortable in walking alongside people, wearing my bib overalls and getting my hands dirty, in essence, accompaniment. I do try to speak for those who do not have a voice due to disenfranchisement and not being invited to the table. I believe it is important we have all the constituencies represented when we have conversation and work very hard to have a safe environment for all to speak to their truth.

- **Leadership Style** *How would your staff, volunteers, and/or colleagues describe your leadership style? I believe these are some of the words used to describe me:*

truth-teller-not a micro manager

problem solving- hardworking
decision maker high expectations
encouraging mentor

seek out the best people for the team and let them do their work

I am comfortable being the leader and/or a contributing member of a team.

- **Priorities** *Among the many responsibilities/roles of the office of Bishop, which do you regard as the highest priority?*

The highest priority in the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin right now is to establish a supportive, working, healthy, and missional relationship with each congregation and every rostered leader. We are in a time of great transitions in our communities where the church has a place and a voice. Each context is unique where creativity and love are earnestly desired. I believe we are at a critical moment in the life of the Church in this Synod. There is so much opportunity to make a difference in individual lives and in our life together. What is it we wonder? What are we noticing? And then, what is God's Spirit calling us to be and do?

- **Personal Ministry Statement** *In 50 words or less, describe your vision as you discern a call as Bishop of the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin.*

I envision a Synod filled with love and grace. I see so much potential around me to be creative in bringing people together in Word, Sacrament, and Service. We all have a voice in calling out to a world in turmoil and distress. Come and see. Do not be afraid. Peace.



Bishop Candidacy Profile

Ramie Bakken



PART I. PERSONAL INFORMATION

Language Proficiencies

English

Educational History

M.Div. Luther Seminary; 2001

BA, Sociology, Women's Studies; University of Minnesota Morris; 1992

Life-Long Learning Experiences

2016, 2020	ELCA Systems Academy	300+ contact hours
2019, 2016	Lutheran Seminary of the Southwest Hispanic Ministry I & II;	50 contact hours
2015	Faith Trust Institute – Leading Boundaries Training;	15 contact hours
2014	ELCA Anti-Racism Training;	15 contact hours
2013	Augsburg University Mini MBA;	40 contact hours

Work History

2013 – present	ELCA – Candidacy Manager/Coordinator for Missional Leadership
2011-2013	Northwest Synod of Wisconsin – Assistant to the Bishop for Companion Relationships
2003-2013	Evangelical Lutheran Church, Black River Falls WI, Pastor
2005-2012	Board of Education, School District of Black River Falls, President 2009-2012
2001-2003	Faith Lutheran Church, St. Charles, MN; Interim Minister

Describe your current Congregation, organization, or agency as to its purpose, size, and relationship to the large church.

I currently serve on the territory of Region 5 ELCA-working with synods in Wisconsin, Illinois, Iowa and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. I also work regularly with Wartburg Theological Seminary, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, and various other ministry partners. This work includes formation of leaders for rostered ministry; serving as a connection point between ELCA churchwide and other expressions of the church; and facilitating collaborative work among ministry partners within Region 5. I annually provide a general report on the work of Region 5 to the twelve synods I serve. You should be able to find this report in the list of pre-assembly reports.

PART II. SAMPLES OF COMPETENCIES

- **Innovation / Creativity**
Equipping Leaders: I enjoy working collaboratively and have the most energy for projects that gather in the gifts of a variety of people. As a parish pastor, working with various ministry teams led to creative outreach in the community as well as tending faithfully to ministry needs of members. I work well as a project leader, as a team member, or simply as an encourager of the team's work. Examples: suicide prevention task force, Friends Sharing Food, synod "Walking Together" planning team, Rostered Ministers Gathering planning, Presiding Bishop Quality of Call Project
- **Participant in the Larger Church**
I have deep appreciation for faithful engagement in God's mission in our congregations, among synods, and in other communities and expressions of the ELCA. As a regional candidacy manager, I work closely with 2 ELCA seminaries, 12 synods in region 5, and with a multitude of churchwide ministries. I am a frequent connector of ministry partners given my current position. Examples: Lutheran Campus Ministry, ELCA World Hunger, Lutheran Disaster Response, ELCA Youth Gathering, Churchwide Assembly, Advocacy Ministries.
- **Pastoral Care**
I believe growing up as the fourth of six children has best prepared me to work with and understand others. In addition to early formation in appreciation of differences, I have been trained to lead workshops in Healthy Congregations™ and Bridgebuilders™. I have experience in consulting with congregations experiencing conflict and have led multiple workshops on fostering healthy relationships for the sake of mission. I take responsibility for my work, acknowledge when I am in the wrong, and allow others to own their challenges.
- **Inter-personal Climate**
Administration: This area of ministry is important to me because of my love for the people I work with and serve. Having solid administrative skills has helped me to interpret the mission in a way that engenders partnership and trust. Examples: synod resolutions committee, synod discipline committee, bishop's listening team, extensive review and

update of congregational constitution, familiarity with model constitution for synods, ELCA constitution, and the ELCA roster manual, ELCA candidacy manual. Policy development: personnel, safe child, financial policies and audit procedures, etc.

- Social Ministry

Strategic Mission Planning: I am a follower of Jesus, seeking to share in God's abundant love for this world. All mission planning and activities flow from our identity in Christ. I understand mission planning to be about listening, evaluating, interpreting, and acting.

In response to the creative, redeeming and sustaining activity of the gospel, we listen to God and one another; we evaluate our surroundings and our gifts/resources; we interpret a path forward that seeks faithfulness to what we have seen and heard and we boldly step forward in mission/ministry. I have led and participated in mission planning in congregations and my community. I have assisted a nearby synod in their mission planning process.

PART III: REFLECTIONS ON MINISTRY

- *Calling* *You are called as a Child of God and into rostered service in this church. Reflect theologically on your sense of call as you consider serving as Bishop of the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin.*

In the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ; God redeems me for a life that shares in God's mission in the world. This life is cruciform-daily God makes a claim on my life; daily I am freed from sin to offer the gifts that God gives in order to be a blessing to others. I trust in God's call to me for particular service and in God's call to all the baptized to witness to the gospel. I am open to the call to serve as your bishop because I seek to share the gifts, experiences, and passion for the gospel that God has given me in a way that lifts up and energizes congregations and other ministries to use their gifts in witness and service. I am eager to walk with you in ministry and mission!

- *Convictions* *Identify the three most prominent themes that others would say are strongly evident in your speaking, teaching, leading, and living.*

2 Corinthians 5:17 and following verses sum up my core convictions-"So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!"

1. We can trust God. The triune God is present and active in this world, in our lives, and in our relationships with one another. Faithful leadership requires paying attention to the variety of ways and places that God is at work.
2. Ministry is an Adventure. The gospel puts to death our self-serving ways so that we might rise with Christ and live for others. This trust in the gospel guides my being in hope-filled relationships with others and the ministry I am engaged in.
3. Walking Together. As the body of Christ, we are called together to a life of witness to the gospel in word and deed; to work for justice and peace; and to alleviate human suffering. We are called together into this holy work and are strengthened by the interdependent relationships we share.

- **Context** *Describe what brings you energy as you consider the role of Bishop and how this might be a best use of your gifts, skills, and passions.*

I am excited to develop trusting relationships as we discover and share what God is up to in our communities. I am excited to learn and share how you are responding to God's call in your congregation. Working collaboratively with ministry teams and lifting up the gifts of others brings me joy. I also enjoy thinking strategically, putting the best ideas into action. Those who work with me regularly know that I appreciate reliable processes and acting out of our shared commitments in a systematic way. In an everevolving context, I also get energy from and appreciate ministry partners that help me think outside the box.

- **Accomplishments** *How has your current ministry setting developed in the last three years, and in what ways have you contributed to this growth or development? Are there other accomplishments or engagements that are formative in your discernment process for this call?*

The ministry I currently engage in is a ministry of accompaniment. It is a stance I learned while serving as companion synod coordinator and experiencing the mutuality of gifts shared between my synod and our companions in Malawi, Africa. My current call is to support the work of synod leadership. Through accompaniment, I seek to understand and respond to the mission context in varied synods. This stance of both listening and sharing my viewpoint has strengthened trust in the ELCA candidacy process as a process of the whole church, even amidst multiple changes in recent years with theological education and formation. In addition, working with nearly two dozen bishops and their staff has been immensely formative in my understanding of the church and synod ministry.

- **Denominational Relationship** *What are your hopes for the ELCA? Describe how you help others understand their relationship to the synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.*

Our purpose is to participate in the mission of God to love and bless the world. We engage in this calling through participation in our local congregation where God gathers us around word and sacrament and gives us new life to share. Partnering with other ministries and congregations allows us to both broaden and deepen our impact as ministers of the gospel together. As a candidacy manager, communicating our interrelatedness within the ELCA is a daily reality. I regularly lift up and connect people to lay schools, campus ministry, outdoor ministry, synod ministries, seminaries, ecumenical partners, the work of ELCA world hunger, global mission and so on.

- **Public Ministry** *In the public role of Bishop, how would you describe your preferred approach, style, and manner?*

My style is one of building trusting relationships where shared work can lead to fruitful ministry. I value diversity and find the best outcomes are formed through intentional engagement with a variety of people, perspectives, and gifts. I have a sense of adventure and am interested in continuing to listen for the Holy Spirit's leading. I am adept at staying connected with those of differing opinions and beliefs. I enjoy and have decades of experience in collaborating with and empowering others. I am also organized and a self-starter, intrinsically motivated to pursue identified goals. As a leader, I challenge myself and others to continual learning and growth.

- **Leadership Style** *How would your staff, volunteers, and/or colleagues describe your leadership style?*
Those who have encouraged me to be open to this call as your bishop share that I bring a calming and positive presence to ministry, and that I have an ability to look at the big picture. I tend to be future minded as I engage challenges and opportunities in particular situations. With this approach, creativity and joy are given space to flourish.
- **Priorities** *Among the many responsibilities/roles of the office of Bishop, which do you regard as the highest priority?*
A bishop is pastor to the synod. As bishop/pastor to the synod the highest priority is the proclamation of and participation in gospel of Jesus Christ. It is a gospel that announces God's redemptive love for us and for all of God's creation. This good news turns us in freedom and love, to our neighbor. As bishop I would work with congregations to dive deeper into a life of discipleship, following the way of Jesus. I would also encourage us to trust God's active presence in the world; encouraging us to get out of the church doors and get to know our community and explore how God is calling us into life giving relationships in new ways.
- **Personal Ministry Statement** *In 50 words or less, describe your vision as you discern a call as Bishop of the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin.*
In baptism, we are drawn into the life of God and sent forth to love the neighbor. As a candidate for bishop, I bring to ministry a tenacious trust in Jesus, gifts of organization, effective collaboration, and love of empowering people to live out their baptismal call in communities of faith.



Bishop Candidacy Profile

Stacie Fidler



PART I. PERSONAL INFORMATION

Language Proficiencies

English

Educational History.

MDiv. Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago, 1995

BA, Religion w/ Asian Studies Concentration; Augustana College, Rock Island IL; 1991

Non-degree, Group Spirituality, Group Leaders Program, Shalem Institute, Washington

DC, 2002

Life-Long Learning Experiences

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| 2018 | Exponent Philanthropy National Conference (2014, 2016) |
| 2018 | Rethinking Stewardship |
| Annually | Festival of Homiletics (regularly for at least 10 years) |
| 2020, 2018 | Companion Synod Visits, Tanzania, India |
| 2009/2011 | Courage to Lead: Seasonal Series (09/10, 10/11) |

Work History

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| 1999-2020 | St. John's Lutheran Church, Rock Island IL, Senior Pastor |
| 1995-1999 | Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Seneca IL, Pastor |

6.95-8/95 St. James Lutheran Church, Forreston IL, Interim Pastor
'91-'93, '94-'95 Seminary Co-op Bookstore, Religious Studies sections
1988-1991 Augustana College, Rock Island IL, Writer/Editor, Alumni Relations

Describe your current Congregation, organization, or agency as to its purpose, size, and relationship to the large church.

St. John's Lutheran Church is a congregation with deep neighborhood roots and relationships. We grew out of a combination of immigrant communities and a neighboring academic community. St. John's was the first bi-lingual church of the Augustana Synod - using Swedish and English. We have continued a commitment to communities of multiple languages to this day.

We host a neighborhood social justice organization from our eastern neighbors, Palomares, and the neighborhood organization for our western neighbors, the Keystone Neighborhood Association. We work to bring both communities together through programming and outreach. Our commitment to neighborhood ministries is the foundation for outreach around the community and the world. Synodical and national church relationships are close to the heart of St. John's, and the relationships are part of our service and budget commitments. We are currently working on two ministry innovations for homeless youth and local poverty.

PART II. SAMPLES OF COMPETENCIES

- Innovation / Creativity
As a long-term pastor, I have been attentive to a continual process of innovation and collaboration to keep the ministries of the congregation vital and relevant. That has meant combining my love of the church with intellectual curiosity, imagination, and an openness to the Spirit. I have a gift for building community, gathering people around a common vision, and imagining how pieces may fit together in new way. Current examples are a neighborhood Catalyst Kitchen project and several "Deep Dive" conversations in the church to envision new opportunities for worship.
- Participant in the Larger Church
My childhood faith community instilled in me a powerful sense of the purpose and possibility of the larger church. From global mission to education to equipping the local community in serving and growing, I have witnessed throughout my life how formative it can be to see the fullness of Christ's work beyond the local community. As a youth, I volunteered at assemblies and attended youth events. As an ordained pastor, I have endeavored to instill that same sense of the whole body of

Christ in daily ministry and my own service, serving on both synodical and churchwide boards.

- **Pastoral Care**
Walking with the beloved children of God is at the heart of my ministry. I seek to incarnate the persistent love of God for all of us, whether it be in visiting at a nursing home or hospital bed, or through meeting a neighbor on a prayer walk around the church. However we do ministry in these times, it must be incarnational. So many have not experienced grace first hand, so many are seeking to know that they are beloved, so many do not believe the church offers these gifts - the ministry of the pastor begins there. It expands to lay people being empowered and engaged in doing that same walk of faith, caring for each other and their neighbors.
- **Inter-personal Climate**
Tending to community requires constant care, and the regular building up of communications skills, trust, and relationships. In our conference, there are a number of churches within blocks of one another and at least three different community contexts. Often we have had to step back from something that caused a strain among the faith communities and rebuild the trust and relationships of the . leaders before moving forward in ministry together. It requires careful listening - sometimes even relearning how - in order to build the body of Christ together.
- **Social Ministry**
This, too, is incarnational ministry. I was in college when I first read Teresa of Avila's words: Christ has no body now but yours...yours are the feet with which he walks to do good. Social ministry - where we live out Christ's heart of compassion for the world - is a central call of the church. We live out the call of Matthew 25, seeing the face of Christ in those around us, even when it is uncomfortable. Social ministry has been a central part of my calling, my leadership, and my service. Examples are serving on the LSSI board and creating the first area homeless youth services.

PART III: REFLECTIONS ON MINISTRY

- **Calling** *You are called as a Child of God and into rostered service in this church. Reflect theologically on your sense of call as you consider serving as Bishop of the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin.*
I begin and travel daily remembering that I am a beloved child of God. I am called to a life of love and service, striving always to live God's promised kingdom here and now. I seek to hear God's call for reconciliation and being a 'repairer of the breach'. That call requires listening to the Spirit and listening to God's people. There are wounds out there that run deep; there are people who do not trust that they will be heard; there are surprises that God is waiting for us to recognize. God's Spirit calls me to bring the gift of

resurrection hope. That call requires a gentle boldness, grounded in prayer and faith.

- **Convictions** *Identify the three most prominent themes that others would say are strongly evident in your speaking, teaching, leading, and living.*

My desire to hear others and hold their presence as a beloved child of God is important; I am told that my heart has an "inviting reverence." I have a gift for standing in the questions with others and walking with them in their stories. I regularly come back to a theme of the scriptures - do not be afraid. Our spiritual heritage is a bold yearning for the Gospel to be at work in us and the world. Fear cannot hold us, and that is a powerful witness to the world. Tied with these is the importance of remembering who and whose we are. We are baptized; in those waters, we can change the world.

- **Context** *Describe what brings you energy as you consider the role of Bishop and how this might be a best use of your gifts, skills, and passions.*

I love hearing peoples' stories, and finding with them how God has been present. I delight in community, seeing people hold one another through the joys and challenges of life. I enjoy considering with others how God is calling or challenging them. I am recharged by quiet, time in prayer and spiritual practices. Part of the call of a Bishop is to be present to the community, to help them experience what it is to know and be known as God's people. It is to stand with them in the discernment of how they are called, and to be grounded in faith as we walk together.

- **Accomplishments** *How has your current ministry setting developed in the last three years, and in what ways have you contributed to this growth or development? Are there other accomplishments or engagements that are formative in your discernment process for this call?*

The last three years have been filled with new life and grief and possibility. We lost long term members and people found life in caring for one another. We grew with new members. A building addition completed 5 years ago has opened growth in community ministries, giving a new heartbeat to neighborhood outreach by opening ourselves up to the risks of welcoming others. Of the \$2.2 million mortgage only \$250,000 in debt remains. We welcomed an intern that had difficulty finding placement due to their gender identity, and worked to introduce our neighboring congregations to the gifts this seminarian brings. I have contributed by continually bringing possibilities to the table, being non-anxious, and leading conversations where questions were welcome.

- **Denominational Relationship** *What are your hopes for the ELCA? Describe how you help others understand their relationship to the synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.*

I want the ELCA to be a vibrant church across all of our expressions. I want the rural/ small town ministries that shaped me to find new ways of vibrancy and community building. I want urban and suburban ministries to recognize ways to lift one another up and share in ministry. I long for the ELCA to have

a sense of itself as the body of Christ in its congregations, ministries, expressions, administration, and the ways those pieces connect to bring life to the world. We need to pray for one another, listen to each other's stories, and re-envision together how our body of faith comes together for the world.

- **Public Ministry** *In the public role of Bishop, how would you describe your preferred approach, style, and manner?*

In the past, our sense of being a 'public church' was easier. Society accepted that we had a voice and a place in the community. Our place in society has shifted dramatically; we have become timid out of fear of divisiveness. But Christ himself was a public voice. I would look for where people are already living their call as a public church and support those. I would listen to the ways leaders long to be a voice of reconciliation and nurture those. I would seek the places where we are being challenged to proclaim justice and lift those up. I would seek ways for divisions to find healing and mutual respect.

- **Leadership Style** *How would your staff, volunteers, and/or colleagues describe your leadership style?*

I approach leadership with a collaborative eye, always looking to expand the table. In problem solving and planning, weaving together a variety of backgrounds and voices is **important to discerning solutions that are imaginative, practical, and sometimes surprising**. I delight in the give and take of working together, and I think and imagine through opportunities both internally and with others. Others have observed that my ability to remain calm and ask discerning questions lowers group anxiety and enables **fresh possibilities to emerge**.

I trust those around me will work mutually for the good of the body. I consider it my role to **create an atmosphere where people can safely ask questions, raise possibilities, and count on one another**. My priority is to lead with dignity and integrity.

- **Priorities** *Among the many responsibilities/roles of the office of Bishop, which do you regard as the highest priority?*

As someone from outside the synod, there would be a learning curve. There are diverse contexts, and all have likely had different reactions to the lack of synodical continuity. I would begin by listening deeply during the May/June forums. If called to the office, I would prioritize assembling a staff to work with me in addressing the most pressing needs of the synod. I would ask questions: How can the synod strengthen and empower the Gospel mandate in our communities? How can we strengthen the relationships of those communities with Christ AND with one another?

- **Personal Ministry Statement** *In 50 words or less, describe your vision as you discern a call as Bishop of the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin.*

My vision is to listen and be thankful for an opportunity to discern in a well thought out process. It is to prayerfully consider my gifts in conversation with

others and examine anew how God may be calling me, and to pray for the SCSW as they discern and listen.

PART IV: CANDIDATE COMMENTARY

I would add to the above items a competency in community and inter-faith ministry. I am looked to by other pastors as an ecumenical leader and have served in leadership for several ecumenical organizations. I represent the faith community on the hospital board. I was the co-founder of theplace2b, an organization providing shelter/services for homeless and at-risk youth that required bringing together mainline, evangelical, interfaith, and business partners for initiation and funding.

The flurry of challenges that accompany cultural change, conflict, and demographic shifts surrounds our congregations. Put those together with the congregational anxiety about the status of our ministries, buildings, and changes in church culture as well, and we stand in a swirl of fear. I am not sure how that manifests in a synod that has had such painful situations with leadership, but I am thankful for how intentional your process is for this election. It gathers many voices around the table, with many people invested in each step. My prayers are with you.



Bishop Candidacy Profile

Joy Mortensen-Wiebe



PART I. PERSONAL INFORMATION

Language Proficiencies

English

Educational History.

M.Education, Lakeland College, Sheboygan WI, Counseling; 2004

M. Div. Luther Seminary; 1992

B.S., Religion, Carroll College, Waukesha WI; 1988

Life-Long Learning Experiences

2019	Professional Counseling CE Hours; 15 contact hours
2018	Synod Boundary Training; 8 contact hours
2018	Faithful Innovations; 30 contact hours
2017	Dealing with Difficult People; 7 contact hours
2015	Influence without Authority; 8 contact hours

Work History

2018-present	St. Luke Lutheran Church, Slinger WI; Pastor
2017	Professional Services Group, West Bend WI; Therapist/School based Therapist
2016-2018	South Central Synod of Wisconsin; Interim Pastor and Interim DEM
2014-2016	Living Hope Lutheran Church, Saukville, WI; Pastor

Describe your current Congregation, organization, or agency as to its purpose, size, and relationship to the large church.

St. Luke, Slinger is a vibrant congregation north of the city of Milwaukee. It is located near a thriving retirement area along Cedar Lakes. The city of Slinger is also known for its school district. 5 years ago, the congregation added onto their building. Soon after, they expanded their staff. The pastor of nine years left shortly after taking a sabbatical to take a synod call which displeased many. All of these transitions have been hard on them, resulting in tension around meeting their substantial mortgage payment, and angst about getting their momentum back. Despite this, they continue to welcome numerous visitors each week, have 70 children in confirmation, and remain outreach focused.

PART II. SAMPLES OF COMPETENCIES

- Innovation / Creativity

In my current call there was substantial anger about the previous pastor leaving shortly after returning from a sabbatical. People were burned out from an extended interim and the lost momentum (this was their perception) so I proposed that the entire congregation take a sabbatical. The strategy was multi-faceted: 1) we could reclaim the word sabbatical back from being the "dirty" word it had become 2) we could allow leaders and teams permission to take a step back and decide what things were essential to do and which things were not during the sabbatical 3) we could actually engage more people over the summer months with intentional activities focused on sabbatical.

At the end of the sabbatical we assessed our learnings. We decided to make some permanent changes, some leaders stepped back and others stepped up in new ways.

- Participant in the Larger Church

I grew up in a congregation that taught me to love the wider church. My home congregation, First English, Oshkosh, and my first pastor Rev. Robert Herder insisted we know our interdependence. When he was installed a district president I served as an acolyte as a young middle school student. Essentially, my whole life I have been drawn to the wider church. I have served on synod council, synod staff, as a DEM, and on various synod committees as a parish pastor. We are stronger together.

- Pastoral Care

In my second call I served as a chaplain and finished four units of Clinical Pastoral Education in order to become a board-certified chaplain. During that time, I also started a program that leveraged the resources of the institution to help congregations build care teams to help train them to extend their ministries of care with the vulnerable elderly of their congregations. I did this because I so valued the relationships, I had the honor of developing with the elderly that I met as a chaplain. I also recognized the isolation that

many of them experienced. I enjoy being in relationship and building relationships. Pastoral care through the years has meant building relationships with people of all ages and backgrounds.

- **Inter-personal Climate**
In my current call I have six paid staff members. We meet weekly. We meet to make sure that we are all on the same page with each other, that we are aware of what is happening within our various responsibilities, to make sure the we are connected to each other, and to help assure that we effectively communicating with one another. As a leader I model healthy communication and I expect healthy communication. We begin in prayer, we share highs and lows, we listen to one another, we are accountable to one another, we remind each other of the reason we do the work that we do.
- **Social Ministry**
St. Luke is a congregation that is very involved in outreach to their community and encourages all ages to be involved. We make mercy mats for the Milwaukee Street Angels. Our middle school youth collaborate on a service project and with seed money from the congregational endowment expand that service into a ministry/ outreach of their design. We have multiple opportunities for service each week that include members of all ages. This all fits within my pastoral view that we take ministry out into the world and that we are all equipped to do this.

PART III: REFLECTIONS ON MINISTRY

- **Calling** *You are called as a Child of God and into rostered service in this church. Reflect theologically on your sense of call as you consider serving as Bishop of the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin.*
In my 27 years of ordained ministry I have served in specialized ministry, on synod staff, churchwide shared staff, interim ministry, as well as with and without my spouse in parish ministry. I have also been nominated for the office of bishop in three other synods previously. Through these years I have learned that it is always God's call and that God is a God of surprises. God gives each of us gifts. We are to use our gifts to build up the body of Christ and to share the good news. I am called to Word and Sacrament ministry and that has already taken more forms than I ever could have imagined. I delight in serving with God's people as a rostered leader.
- **Convictions** *Identify the three most prominent themes that others would say are strongly evident in your speaking, teaching, leading, and living.*
Grace- We have been saved by grace. God's grace that is not of our doing.

Ephesians 2:8- 10. We get out in the world and share this news because we want to, because it is amazing and powerful and true.

Matthew 28-"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them ...teaching them... lo I am with you until the end of the age". We have a responsibility to one another to know our faith, to talk about our faith, and to teach our faith, not only to those already inside of our church walls, but also to our neighborhoods and beyond.

Matthew 18:15-20- Healthy relationships in community. These verses give guidance to how we are to live with one another around disagreements. They have been especially important to me in my years as a synodical leader.

- **Context** *Describe what brings you energy as you consider the role of Bishop and how this might be a best use of your gifts, skills, and passions.*
I loved my work as a synodical leader in the East Central synod. I loved the relationships that I developed and deepened over the 10 years I served in that capacity. I loved the diversity and the challenge that each new day often brought. I thrive in environments where I am able to function pastorally while also balancing my ability to think quickly and to empower others. The geographical context of the South-Central Synod of WI also gives me energy with its blend of urban and rural communities.
- **Accomplishments** *How has your current ministry setting developed in the last three years, and in what ways have you contributed to this growth or development? Are there other accomplishments or engagements that are formative in your discernment process for this call?*
Since leaving the synod staff of the East Central Synod I have primarily done interim ministry, despite the fact that two of these calls have been "settled" calls. I am comfortable in these settings; often needing to say and do the difficult things. I am not afraid to take risks, but I am not capricious. In the last three years, I have also spent considerable time in my work as therapist working with clients who have experienced considerable trauma. This I consider quite formative in my discernment process. The South-Central Synod of Wisconsin has gone through a number of different traumas over the last many years. People and congregations are in different places in their processing and in their healing. My competency and comfort in working with trauma has informed and supported my congregational work and I believe it would be an asset in the office of bishop.
- **Denominational Relationship** *What are your hopes for the ELCA? Describe how you help others understand their relationship to the synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.*
The ELCA is still young as a denomination, although, I think we forget this. I love that we are welcoming. I love that as an organization we can do so much more together than we can do alone. I love the many changes we have gone through in our early life together. We are not perfect. Nothing made with hands is. I believe the Holy Spirit is present, active and moving in the three expressions of the ELCA. Congregations are the mission center and as synods we support, equip, and translate between the congregations and our national expression. Synods are also missional centers that speak to the unique diversity of our contexts and inform what God is up to by connecting congregations, other synods, etc. Our churchwide express is the missional expression that connects us to one another and the world in deeper ways. I am grateful to be a part of this church and to serve as a pastor of the church. My hope is that the ELCA continues to

embrace its unique theology to push forward along the path of inclusivity, justice, and mercy and to not shy away from showing the world the great God that we believe in.

- **Public Ministry** *In the public role of Bishop, how would you describe your preferred approach, style, and manner?*

In the East Central Synod I was the only Associate with the Bishop. We had a very small staff. I had primary responsibility for the assembly, candidacy committee, conflict, mobility, synod endowment, and I was the DEM. I grew very comfortable in the public ministry role that all of these responsibilities required. I am informal and approachable. I utilize humor and appreciate humor in the appropriate settings. I can shift well from setting to setting in the course of a day as is often required in the office of Bishop. I like to listen and do not always need to be the first to speak. I prefer direct communication and can be direct myself.

- **Leadership Style** *How would your staff, volunteers, and/or colleagues describe your leadership style? I have long said and believed that growing up with a twin has impacted my leadership style immensely. I grew up sharing just about everything. As a twin you don't get the spotlight much. In leadership I don't need the spotlight and thus, am very comfortable sharing leadership. I enjoy helping others grow into their gifts and leadership abilities. Sharing power and authority brings me a certain kind of joy that is hard to explain. I expect staff members to be accountable while also fostering a sense of teamwork.*

- **Priorities** *Among the many responsibilities/roles of the office of Bishop, which do you regard as the highest priority?*

Constitutionally the bishop is the synod's pastor. Pastors are charged to preach, teach, and to administer the sacraments. This is a unique calling. The constitution also places high in the list of duties that of pastoral care. This to me is the highest priority for the next bishop of the South-Central Synod. The role of pastoral care on the part of the bishop speaks to the profile the synod created. A bishop who is a relationship builder is involved in pastoral care. A bishop who is communicator, an organizational steward, a Lutheran visionary, and an attendant in the midst of change is also tending well to pastoral care. I have a pastoral heart and will lead from that heart to fulfill the duties that follow as congregations continue to change, as society and culture changes, as finances present challenges, and as God's future unfolds.

- **Personal Ministry Statement** *In 50 words or less, describe your vision as you discern a call as Bishop of the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin.*

"Care for God's people bear their burdens and do not betray their confidence. So, discipline yourself in life and teaching.... Witness faithfully in word and deed to all people. Give and receive comfort as you serve within the Church. And be of good courage for God has called you."

Ordination Service prayer, LBW