



South-Central Synod of Wisconsin
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release:

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Madison (Oct. 7, 2020) – The Rev. Joy Mortensen-Wiebe will be installed as bishop of the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America on Sunday, October 11 at 1:00 pm. Due to the pandemic, people will gather virtually by a live stream originating from New Heights Lutheran Church in Black Earth, Wisconsin.

“We are church together for the sake of the world and I am deeply moved that we begin our time together in worship. The 138 worshipping communities in south-central Wisconsin are connected by the gift of technology but more importantly in this moment by the Holy Spirit. The hours of planning and care that went into this virtual celebration are witness to the passion that we are church together and that we have a holy calling to share the love of Jesus with the world,” Mortensen-Wiebe says of the installation service.

Special guests participating include the ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton; the Rev. Peter Rogness, former interim-bishop of the South-Central Synod of Wis.; the Rev. Idalia Negrón, Bishop of the ELCA Caribbean synod (participating virtually); the Rev. Paul Erickson, Bishop of the ELCA Greater Milwaukee Synod; the Rev. Gerald Mansholt, Bishop of the ELCA East-Central Synod of Wisconsin; and ecumenical partner, the Rev. Matt Gunter, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Fond du Lac.

"Bishop Mortensen-Wiebe emerged from a very strong field of four nominees and is well equipped to lead in such rapidly changing times. We are a church in energetic mission, even as the field for that work has become so very different," shared the Rev. Peter Rogness, former interim bishop of the synod.

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According to Deacon Vicki Hanrahan, Assistant to the Bishop for Synodical Life, serving on the bishop's staff, "This was also an especially meaningful election and installation as it has happened during the year of the 50th anniversary of Lutheran women being ordained in the United States, 40 years of women of color being ordained and the 10 years of LBGQTIA individuals being able to serve freely."

About Bishop Joy Mortensen-Wiebe

In an historic assembly, the Rev. Joy Mortensen-Wiebe was elected August 29 to serve a six-year term as the bishop of the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. One of 65 synods in the ELCA, it serves 138 worshipping communities, 325 pastors and deacons and over 86,000 members. She assumed office October 1, 2020 and succeeds the Rev. Peter Rogness who served as interim bishop from September 26, 2019 through September 30, 2020.

Mortensen-Wiebe was elected on the third ballot with 166 votes. The Rev. Stacie Fidar, pastor of St. John's Lutheran Church Rock Island, IL received 165 votes.

While the Rev. Mortensen-Wiebe is not the first female to be elected bishop of this synod, the election was historic on another level. This was the first time an election for this synod has taken place in which all the gathered were not assembled in person. While normally held at a venue in Madison or the Wisconsin Dells, this assembly, due to the pandemic, was held virtually via videoconference. Over 350 voting members connected using interactive technologies to elect new leadership of the synod and vote on important matters pertaining to the future of its ministry.

Bishop Mortensen-Wiebe is returning to our synod after previously serving as our Interim Director for Evangelical Mission in 2018 and as an intentional interim pastor at First Lutheran Church in Beaver Dam in 2017. She most recently served as pastor of St. Luke Lutheran Church in Slinger, Wis. Previously she served several Wisconsin churches including St. Paul in Mayville, Living Hope in Saukville, All Saints in Oshkosh; and Grace in Tomahawk. Bishop Joy also served as Associate to the Bishop in the East Central Synod of Wisconsin from 2004-2014 and as pastor chaplain of Lutheran Homes of Oshkosh Inc.

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Education:

Mortensen-Wiebe received a Bachelor of Science degree from Carroll College in Waukesha, Wis., in 1988, a Master of Divinity degree from Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minn., in 1992, and a Master of Education degree from Lakeland University in Plymouth, Wis., in 2004. She is married to the Rev. Darin Wiebe and they have two daughters, Elida and Julia.

About the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:

The ELCA is one of the largest Christian denominations in the United States, with nearly 3.3 million members in more than 8,900 worshipping communities across the 50 states and in the Caribbean region. Known as the church of “God’s work. Our hands.,” the ELCA emphasizes the saving grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ, unity among Christians and service in the world. The ELCA’s roots are in the writings of the German church reformer Martin Luther.

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Location of Installation: Photography and interviews can be coordinated through Deacon Hanrahan at (608) 469-8073. A mask should be worn and social distancing observed.

The live stream origination site – New Heights Church - is located at: 1705 Center Street/Black Earth.

MEDIA KIT

A digital version of this media kit and photos will be available on the synod website on Sunday immediately following the installation approximately 2:30 pm.

Go to: <https://scsw-elca.org/bishopinstallation>
