

# Rev. Angela Denker

## (She/her)

**Current Position: Pastor of  
Visitation and Public Theology  
Lake Nokomis Lutheran Church**



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**Date and Year of Ordination:** September 20, 2008

### **Previous Calls and Positions:**

- 2019-2023 - Pastor - Grace Lutheran Church - Brownton, MN
- 2018-2019 - Interim Teaching Pastor - Easter Lutheran Church - Eagan, MN
- 2015-2017 - Pastor for Community Life and Discipleship - Messiah Lutheran Church Yorba Linda, CA
- 2013-2015 - Pastor - St. Philip Lutheran Church - Glenview, IL
- 2011-2012 - Intern Pastor - Community Lutheran Church - Las Vegas, NV
- 2005-2009 - Sports Reporter - Various Publications including Star Tribune, Sports Illustrated, Naples (FL) Daily News

### **Education and Earned Degrees:**

- Master of Divinity - Luther Seminary - 2009-2013
- Bachelor of Magazine Journalism - University of Missouri: Columbia - 2003-2006

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### **Describe your process of discerning this potential call to serve as our next bishop:**

I have not spent lengthy time in discernment as my name was only raised on Thursday night's nominating ballot. In 2022, I finished fifth in voting for synodical bishop of the Southwestern Minnesota Synod and was part of the initial nominees there, so I am somewhat familiar with the discernment process and role of synodical bishop. I feel compelled to remain in the conversation in Minneapolis to raise the issue of Christian Nationalism and our Lutheran theological response to it as a critical issue that needs courageous engagement from our synod.

## **What is your vision for the Minneapolis Area Synod?**

I would appreciate bishop leadership characterized by courage and care. I think too often white American Lutherans have succumbed to Lutheran quietism and have failed to confidently and courageously proclaim our unique theological witness, particularly when it comes to the Theology of the Cross in contrast to a Theology of Glory. We need to confidently stand against the spread of Christian Nationalism and religious violence and hatred that has claimed the banner of Christianity in America, especially as it relates to the ongoing sanctioning of white supremacy under the guise of Christianity. I also know that clergy and lay leaders alike have experienced high rates of burn out, dejection, loneliness and despair, particularly after the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to prophetic witness, we need a bishop and staff who will prioritize pastoral care of lay leaders and rostered leaders.

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## **What do you see as principal challenges and opportunities to this synod in the next six years, and how would you approach them?**

- The spread of Christian Nationalism - Christianity being used as a cover for white supremacist and far-right-wing political movements - Burn out of lay and rostered leaders - Financial insolvency - Growing irrelevancy Prayer and spiritual discernment of the Holy Spirit's guidance must be the first step, and then leaning into courage and care - and moving away from a Church Growth/capitalist/business view of how our synod and churches should be run.

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## **What has prepared you to be effective in creating belonging among various cultural groups?**

As you can see by my previous call and work experiences, I have served in a wide variety of places, many of which were more culturally and racially diverse. As a journalist, I have learned to be curious and to listen first - rather than to come in with my solutions and ideas initially. Also as a woman well-accustomed to working in male-dominated spaces, I am attuned to what it feels like to be left out and on the margins, and I'm always looking to build inclusion.

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**Describe up to five recent or past synod, churchwide activities or community-related activities that have significantly impacted you. How do these experiences inform your vision for serving as our next bishop?**

I have been deeply impacted by friendship and mentorship by other women pastors in this synod. As someone who had worked mostly with men in the past, I have learned so much from these women and have grown as a pastor because of them. In these casual gatherings, walks, coffees, message groups - I have seen what effective church leadership looks like, and how to continue in ministry even in difficult situations. I hope whoever our next bishop is, they will seek to surround themselves with people who are smarter and more capable than themselves, and people who are also different from them and bring different experiences.

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**In what ways have you applied new learnings to your current context?**

I am still new in my current context, having just begun a month ago. I am learning a lot from working closely with our parish nurse, and I've seen from her the value of care ministry from a different perspective than I've ever seen before.

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**What specific leadership skills and spiritual gifts have you used in developing lay and clergy leaders that you would bring as bishop of this synod?**

I use my reporting and listening skills to deeply get to know leaders in my contexts, and to help put them in the best place to succeed. I am always looking to surround myself with the most talented and unique people in the room.

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