



Minneapolis Area Synod of the ELCA

Frequently Asked Questions about the 2024 Election of a Bishop Minneapolis Area Synod

We invite you to pray for the synod as we prepare for the election of the next bishop. The bishop election process is an opportunity for us to discern the needs of the synod and who God is calling as our next leader to guide us.



To access this document and other information provided by the Bishop Election Committee scan this QR code or visit our page at:
www.mpls-synod.org/2024-bishop-election

1. Is there a Synod Profile available for potential candidates and congregations about the Minneapolis Area Synod?

Yes, the BEC has provided a synod profile for potential bishop candidates and congregations with information about the Minneapolis Area Synod. This includes:

- a. The current mission of the synod;
- b. Information about the synod's financial situation;
- c. Description of the structure of the synod;
- d. Demographic information about the synod and its congregations;
- e. Based on conversations throughout the fall, the profile includes opportunities and challenges facing the Minneapolis Area Synod.

2. Who can serve as the bishop of the Minneapolis Area Synod?

Candidates for bishop must be an ELCA minister of Word and Sacrament (as defined in section 8.11 of the Minneapolis Area Synod Constitution, which you can find [here](#)), though they need not be serving in the Minneapolis Area Synod. That person may serve up to two consecutive six-year terms. Nominees for bishop are required to sign a disclosure form authorizing a background check that will be conducted prior to the Synod Assembly.

3. Is there a job description for the Office of Bishop?

Chapter 8 of the [Minneapolis Area Synod constitution](#) outlines the qualifications, responsibilities, and term of office for the bishop. The Bishop serves as:

- The synod's pastor and is called to administer sacraments, preach, provide pastoral care, ordain, install, advise and counsel, interpret and advocate, and serve as the synodical ecumenical officer;
- The synod's chief executive and administrative officer, overseeing and administering the work of the synod; and
- Supervising the leadership of other officers and staff.

4. Who elects the bishop?

The bishop will be elected by voting members of the Synod Assembly—lay members elected by the congregations of this synod together with all ordained pastors and deacons under call on the rosters of this synod, retired pastors elected in caucus to represent the retired pastors on the roster of this synod, the officers of the synod, and duly elected members of the Synod Council.

5. When will the next bishop of this synod be elected?

The bishop will be elected at the next Synod Assembly, which is set for **May 2-4, 2024**, at Lord of Life Lutheran Church, Ramsey.

6. How can individuals and congregations learn more about the bishop election process?

Listening sessions for congregations were held throughout late October and November. In addition, the BEC provided information at the Bishop’s Theological Conference and the Communicators Gathering. We also met the Strategic Ministries cohort, the Leaders of Color gathering, Interim Ministers cohort, and Conference gatherings.

Information was sent to voting members of Conference Assemblies in late January. Voting members of the Synod Assembly will receive information in early April. All materials will also be posted on the Synod website. Another resource is the Synod constitution and bylaws. Constitution Section S9.04 and Bylaws S9.04.01-.03 specify the nomination and election procedure. Sections S8.10 - S8.15 outline the qualification, responsibilities, and term of Office of the Bishop. Sections S7.01 – S7.32 relate to the Synod Assembly.

7. What opportunities will be available to learn more about candidates for bishop?

Sunday, April 7, 2024 | 2:00PM – 3:30PM

Location: Our Saviour’s Lutheran, 19001 Jackson St NE, East Bethel, MN 55011

Wednesday, April 10, 2024 | 7:00PM – 8:30PM

Location: TBD

Saturday, April 13, 2024 | 10:00AM – 11:30AM

Location: Bethel Lutheran Church, Minneapolis 4120 17th Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN

Tuesday, April 16, 2024 | 7:00PM-8:30PM

Location: Via Zoom

8. What is the process for nominating candidates for bishop?

Candidates for bishop are nominated in two ways:

1. At **Conference Assemblies**, each conference may nominate up to three persons for bishop. Conferences will meet in four different locations, on **Saturday, February 10, 2024**.

Following the action of Conference Assemblies to identify nominees for bishop, Synod Vice President Felecia Boone will contact those nominated to ascertain their willingness to serve. Those who wish to keep their name in nomination must submit biographical information using the form available from the Bishop Election Committee no later than **March 15**, so that information can be prepared and sent to voting members prior to the Synod Assembly. Biographical information will be posted on the synod website once all required forms are submitted by nominees.

If a voting member intends to nominate an ordained ELCA pastor for bishop at the Conference Assemblies follow these steps:

- a. Please speak with the individual in advance to confirm that the individual is willing to stand for election to the office of bishop.
 - b. Come to the Conference Assemblies with contact information that includes the name of the congregation or institution served by the nominee, email address, and phone number.
2. At the **Synod Assembly**, candidates can also be nominated. In the election for the presiding bishop and synodical bishops in the ELCA, the Nominating Ballot is typically an ecclesiastical ballot or a variation on such a ballot. On the Nominating Ballot at the Minneapolis Area Synod Assembly, all those who accepted the nomination at Conference Assemblies will be listed on the ballot. In addition, the ballot will contain a place to write in the name of a nominee.
- a. Advance preparation in contacting a nominee and preparation of the biographical information are in the candidate's and the assembly's best interest.
 - b. If a voting member decides to add a name at the Synod Assembly, some preparatory work would be helpful. It is best to confirm with the individual you ask about their willingness to stand for election. If they consent to the nomination, ask them to complete the candidate's biographical information and disclosure forms. The candidate should provide both forms electronically and a headshot photo to the BEC. If, on the first ballot, the individual is among the top seven, the biographical information form will be copied and distributed to voting members before the second ballot. The disclosure form will permit the required background checking process to begin immediately following the Synod Assembly if the individual is elected bishop.

9. Can a congregation instruct its voting members how to vote at the Synod Assembly?

No. Each voting member of the Synod Assembly acts on behalf of the Synod, rather than on behalf of the congregation that selected them to be a member of the assembly. There are various ways in which the voting members are representative: balance of women and men, 60 percent laity, and proportionate numbers of voting members from the smallest to largest congregations. The governing documents of the ELCA and all ELCA synods refer to members of the assembly as “voting members” rather than “delegates.” The Office of the Secretary of the ELCA explains that this term was chosen to reflect the understanding that the Synod Assembly is an assembly of the people of the church, some of whom have been duly granted voting responsibilities for governance and elections on behalf of the synod, and voting members are not politicized delegates.

10. What is the role of the Bishop Election Committee?

The Synod constitution provides for a Bishop Election Committee to oversee the nomination and election process, working in cooperation with the Vice President of the Synod and the Assembly Operations and Election Committees. The committee is impartial and guided by the constitution to prepare congregations and voting members to be informed participants in the election. Its members were nominated by the Synod Nominating Committee and elected by the Synod Council on June 15, 2023.

Members of the 2024 Bishop Election Committee are available to answer your questions and can be reached through the Minneapolis Area Synod Office, by emailing them directly at BEC@mpls-synod.org.

2024 Bishop Election Committee

The Rev. Hierald E. Osorto, chair, St. Paul's-San Pablo Lutheran, Minneapolis

The Rev. Rebecca Gamble, Normandale Lutheran Church, Edina

Emma Kasiga, Minnesota Swahili Christian Church, Minneapolis

The Rev. Hans Lee, Retired, Bethlehem Lutheran, Minneapolis

Tim Nelson, Braham Lutheran Church, Braham

Dcn. Savannah Olaphson, Immanuel Lutheran Church, Eden Prairie

Molly Schroeder, Saron Lutheran Big Lake, Big Lake

Ex Officio

Felecia Boone, Synod Vice President, Calvary Lutheran, Minneapolis

Advisor

Janet Thompson, Edina Community Lutheran Church, Edina

[Read here](#) to learn more about the members of the Bishop Election Committee.