



La Crosse Area Synod

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's Work. Our Hands.

Rev. Jim Arends, Bishop
Rev. Elizabeth Howe, Director of Evangelical Mission / Assistant to the Bishop

January 2020

Dear Voting Member of the 2020 La Crosse Area Synod Assembly,

Thank you for agreeing to serve as a Voting Member of the 2020 Synod Assembly, meeting we other church leaders in our synod under the theme: “. . . *we will Sing.*” Our gathering at the UW-La Crosse Student Union June 12-14 will be most significant this year. After twelve years of faithful service and leadership as our synod bishop – and decades of dedicated ministry to the Gospel of Our Lord and Savior – Bishop Jim Arends is retiring.

So, at the 2020 Synod Assembly, we need to call a new bishop. After worshiping God and rededicating ourselves to Christ's Mission, the election of our next bishop will be the main focus of our gathering in June.

Because of the importance of this election, people around our Synod have been reflecting, studying and holding conversations about the challenges we face as disciples of Christ. As part of our preparation for this election, we were encouraged to take a Synod Survey articulating our hopes and concerns for how our next bishop might best lead us in facing our Christian challenges. The Committee for the Bishop Election reviewed all responses submitted online and on paper, and has prepared a **Synod Survey Summary**, which will be posted to the [Bishop Election web page](#).

It is our fervent hope that the missions and ministries – the hopes and dreams of our Synod as expressed in the responses to the Survey – will help to guide you as you consider candidates for this very important leadership position.

PLEASE NOTE:

The normal **Pre-Assembly Caucuses** - where the Synod budget and nominations for Synod positions are considered - will be held on:

East Conf, Sun., May 3, 3 PM, Peace-Tomah

South Conf, Sun., May 3, 7PM, Trinity-Cashton

North Conf, Mon, May 4, 6:30 PM, TBD

West Conf, Tue., May 5, 7PM, Our Savior's-La Crosse

THE SPECIFICS: Three Steps to Calling a New Bishop

FIRST: Conference Nominating Caucuses – Sunday, March 15, 2020 – 3:00 PM

On Sunday, March 15 the Voting Members of the 2020 Synod Assembly will gather in their conferences to hold a special “Conference Nominating Caucus.” The locations for these caucuses are:

South Conference	Middle Coon Valley, Chaseburg
North Conference	Living Hope, Ettrick
East Conference	Trinity, Sparta
West Conference	Bethel, La Crosse

Each Conference Caucus may nominate up to three names to go forward as candidates for bishop.

Please Note: There can be no nominations from the floor or write-in votes at Synod Assembly.

Any ordained pastor in the ELCA is eligible for nomination. **But** → Be sure to have permission from the prospective nominee before the nominating caucus. Also, if you nominate a willing pastor, you will have a few minutes to talk about your nominee. You may also hand out a brief printed

resume or bio, as long as it is no longer than 250 words and you bring enough copies for 80-100 people.

The caucuses are open to the public. However, only 2020 Assembly Voting Members – those who have been elected by their congregations – will be able to make or second nominations. Only elected Voting Members will vote.

SECOND: Bishop Candidate Forums

The candidates for election arising from the Conference Nominating Caucuses will be asked to participate in a series of “Candidate Forums.” There will be one Forum held in each conference to give us all the opportunity to hear the candidates’ responses to our concerns. These Candidate Forums will each be identical in format, and the candidates will speak in random order to a set of questions. So, you can attend any of the forums as is most convenient. It is not necessary to attend the forum in your own conference. The forums are expected to last from 1½-2 hours. They are scheduled as follows:

South Conference	Sat., April 25 - 3 PM	Middle Coon Valley, Chaseburg
East Conference	Sun., April 26 - 2PM	Trinity, Sparta
West Conference	Sun., April 26 - 7 PM	First, Onalaska
North Conference	Mon., April 27 - 6 PM	Mt. Calvary, Trempealeau

Gathering Questions for the Forums: Anyone may submit a question for use at the forums. Postcards will be distributed at the Nominating Caucuses, and a special web page will be created to receive questions. The actual questions used at the forums will be crafted by the Committee for the Bishop Election from these submissions. Thus, each candidate will respond to the same questions at each Candidate Forum.

THIRD: An Ecclesiastical Election at the Assembly

At the Assembly, the election of our new bishop will take a series of ballots, each one narrowing the field of candidates, as follows:

<u>Ballot</u>	<u>Candidates</u>	<u>To Elect</u>	<u>Timing</u>
First	All from the Nominating Caucuses	75%	Friday Evening
Second	Top Six on the First Ballot	75%	Saturday Morning
Third	Top Four on the Second Ballot	66%	Saturday Afternoon
Fourth	Top Three on the Third Ballot	66%	Sunday Morning
Fifth	Top Two on the Fourth Ballot	Majority	Sunday Morning

The top six candidates on the First Ballot will address the Assembly briefly on Saturday morning before the Second Ballot. In addition, there will be a series of “candidate conversations” on Saturday afternoon after the Third Ballot with the remaining three candidates.

As you can see, to participate fully in the election, you will need to attend each session of the Assembly. Please mark your calendars now with the dates of the above important meetings.

We are confident that our Savior Jesus Christ is walking with us in this journey. May the Holy Spirit guide our deliberations. God’s grace and peace to you!

The 2019-2020 Committee for The Bishop Election,

Pr Barbara Bruneau	Pr Meg Hoversten	Cheryl Mader	Pr Alyssa Mitchell
Dennis Glaman	Eddie Kim	Steve McDougal	Mark Zellmer
Larry Hoppe	Pr Len Liptack		