

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION – Rev. Elizabeth-Ann “Becky” Swanson

1. **Name:** Elizabeth-Ann “Becky” Ingersoll Swanson
2. **Current Position:** Pastor
3. **Congregation Membership:** Advent Lutheran Church, Morton, IL
4. **Date/Year of Birth:** Oct 8, 1961
5. **Date/Year of Ordination:** 2011 as Deaconess; 2020 as Pastor
6. **Previous Positions:**
 - a. Pastor, Advent Lutheran, Morton, IL (current) 2020-present
 - b. Interim Pastor, Halfway Creek Lutheran Church, Holmen, WI; 2018-2020
 - c. Director and Assistant Professor of Contextual Education, Trinity Lutheran Seminary, Columbus, OH; 2014-2017
 - d. Director of Music Ministries, Bethel Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, MN 2013
Choral Director, Interim Music Director, St. Anthony Park Lutheran Church, St. Paul, MN 2006-2013
 - e. Director of Worship and Music, Glen Cary Lutheran Church, Ham Lake, MN 2003-2006
Director of Worship and Music, Lake of the Isles Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, MN 1997-2003
 - f. Choir(s) Director, Gustavus Adolphus Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, MN 1986-1997
 - g. **Concurrent (bi-vocational) positions beginning with Gustavus Adolphus and ending with Bethel:**
 - Senior Instructional Designer, Ameriprise, Minneapolis, MN 2010-2013
 - Manager of Learning and Development, MinuteClinic, Minneapolis, MN 2006-2010
 - HR Training Manager, BestBuy, Eden Prairie, MN 2001-2003
 - Performance Consultant, Triad Performance Technologies, Minneapolis, MN 2000-2001
 - IT Training Manager, Fallon, Minneapolis, MN 1999-2000
 - Senior IT Training Consultant, St. Paul Companies (now Travelers), St. Paul, MN 1997-1999
 - Music/Band teacher, K-8 and middle school, Minneapolis Public Schools 1986-1991
7. **Education and Earned Degrees** (with institutions and years, most recent first):
B.A. Augsburg College (now Augsburg University) 1984
MSM Master of Sacred Music, Luther Seminary, 2005
8. **Please list up to five (5) current or past synodical or Churchwide activities that would inform your service as Bishop of the La Crosse Area Synod.**
 - a. Member of Portico Board of Trustees, (Secretary, Board Development, and Services and Solutions committees)
 - b. Church in Society Committee, Anti-racism task force, LaCrosse Area Synod
 - c. Candidacy Committee, Indiana-Kentucky Synod

- d. International relationship and accompaniment trips with LWF to Nepal and St. Paul Area Synod to Guatemala
- e. Member of Deaconess Community Board of Directors, (communications, governance, life together committees; Led Community covenant task force).

9. List of up to five (5) current or past community-related activities that would inform your service as Bishop of this Synod.

- a. Anti-racism cohort training with Rozella Haydeé White
- b. Short-term staff at Holden Village multiple times
- c. Active with Preventing Harm MN, and early childhood education non-profits, ISIAH (community faith-based organizing in Minneapolis/St. Paul);
- d. Music director in community Musical Theaters in Twin Cities

10. What gifts would you bring to the office of Bishop of this Synod (200 words maximum)

I absolutely trust that the Holy Spirit is sustaining the church despite our human frailty and sin. And yet, we have to act. My ministry has been focused on encouraging and equipping the gifts of the baptized to bring those gifts to bear for the sake of the world. I would continue to do that as bishop. The diaconal lens I bring focuses on our call as all the baptized to share God's love for the sake of the world.

In addition to those theological foundations, I bring 28 years of bi-vocational ministry. I understand the challenges and gifts of this model for both the individual and the congregation.

I have many years of leadership development experience in corporate and church settings, including serving at a seminary, and on a candidacy committee. I hold an International Coaching Federation certification.

My experience includes faith-based community organizing work and a world view that is grounded in the Gospel of Jesus Christ as well as the principal of Imago Dei — each individual is made in the image of God and is beloved by God. Organizing work has developed for me a collection of gifts that have helped me in my ministry and each of the communities I have served. It has also given me the opportunity to practice having hard conversations and helping others to do so as well.

Finally, although I think my jokes are average, I do not plan to grow a mustache and I still have a full head of hair.

11. What do you see as the principal challenge this Synod will face in the next six (6) years, and how would you address it (200 words maximum)?

The principal challenge for the church is always to listen for the Spirit and discern together where the Spirit is leading. As we come out of the pandemic, recruiting, forming, and supporting leaders for faith communities will be a synodical focus - especially as another wave of retirements is looming from the stress of this past year.

Growing in our understanding of the gift of solidarity, diversity within our leadership that at least mirrors our communities will be an important place for our faith communities to focus. Leaders of congregations, rostered and lay, need encouragement and support to live into the

way the Spirit is reshaping the church. To continue the collaboration and collegiality among the synod is critical.

I think the other thing that the church (and therefore the synod) will face is wrestling with “what and who is the church for?” As someone with a strong diaconal background, I understand the church to be for the formation of followers of Jesus who will transform the world with God’s love. How does each faith community understand themselves to be part of the force that is a force for transforming the community they are in? I get excited to think about the new relationships that will form in these next years

12. Describe your leadership style (200 words maximum).

My background as a music director strongly influences my leadership. Each individual is called on to play their part to the best of their ability. As the conductor, I can’t sing all the parts or play all the parts, but I choose the pieces, direct the rehearsals, coach individuals, and start and stop the ensemble together while shaping the dynamics and phrasing as we go. We all have to play or sing our best for the piece to be beautiful and express the ideas and emotions we want it to.

Leadership for me is like that in many respects. Each individual is crucial to the outcome. Each brings their gifts and plays their parts (or even, sometimes rests!) otherwise the work cannot be done. I prefer ensemble over competitive team. The greatest compliment I have ever received from someone on one of my teams about how my listening and encouragement helped them do their best.

13. What is the last book you read that had special significance for you?

“The Sum of Us: What Racism Costs Everyone and How We Can Prosper Together” by Heather McGhee. Ms. McGhee traces the history of the creation of the ideas of race and human hierarchy, the zero-sum trap, and the pattern of how we have been captive to rhetoric that pits people against one another, keeping us from seeing and experiencing the gift of diversity and solidarity. I hope that it will give me language to talk about these concepts when they arise in conversation.

14. What is your favorite movie and why?

Too many movies to choose from! The TV series that keeps coming up in my preaching is “The Good Place” (just use Jesus’ points!!) and Schitt’s Creek (relationships that are based in the real, broken, and glorious parts of each person).

15. What are your hobbies/interests?

I enjoy the outdoors by hiking and walking; camping when I get people to go with me. I hope to walk the Camino de Santiago at some point. I enjoy traveling - especially when it provides the opportunity for making relationships and learning. The creative pursuits that feed my soul and help me listen to God on my sabbath days are sewing or other fiber work. I’ve been quilting during the pandemic. I’m also a knitter when I need a portable project.

16. What else would you like to share with us (100 words maximum)?

One of the comments in the synod survey wondered about mergers at the synod level. Several congregations in our synod are in parish settings or contemplating them and several more worked collaboratively during the pandemic. I have been part of mergers and consolidations

seven times during my ministry, both in ministry and corporate settings and know leadership is crucial for people to feel as safe and cared for through those times as possible. Communication, trustworthiness, forthrightness and transparency are crucial leadership qualities that I exhibit. None of us knows exactly what the Spirit is bringing to birth in our church, we only know that God's hand is leading us and God's love supporting us