



South Dakota Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

Dear South Dakota Synod voting members,

The task of electing our Synod's Bishop is an important one. Included in your Assembly materials is the "Process for Electing a Bishop" from the South Dakota Synod Constitution. It is included so that you can be familiar with the process before you come and for referral once we engage the process at Assembly.

There has been much conversation leading up to this election; please refer to www.sdsynod.org/bishopelection on the synod website to find more information on the Bishop Election and the communications and processes that have been happening leading up to Assembly time. This information on the website includes the vita for Bishop David Zellmer. Although most Conferences identified potential nominees for the office of Bishop, at this time, none of those nominees except for the current Bishop, David Zellmer, have chosen be included in the pre-assembly consideration. It is important to note that because no one is actually a nominee until the first ballot of the Assembly, there is also no official withdrawal process until the Assembly and any ordained pastor in the ELCA, including those named at Conference Assemblies, can still be nominated on that first ballot of the Assembly.

Finally, the prayer below is offered:

Almighty God, you have given your Holy Spirit to the church to lead us into all truth. Bless with the Spirit's grace and presence the people of the South Dakota Synod as we prepare to elect a bishop. Keep us steadfast in faith and united in love, that we may manifest your glory and prepare for the way of your kingdom; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

God's Blessings, Bishop Election Committee

Pastor Dwight Stensgaard, Chair
Pastor Heidi Binstock
John Rasmussen



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Process for Electing a Bishop

From Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions

August 2012

S9.04. The Bishop shall be elected by the Synod Assembly. The process of nomination and election shall be as provided in the bylaws.

S9.04.01 The Bishop shall be elected by ecclesiastical ballot. Three-fourths of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election on the first ballot. If no one is elected, the first ballot shall be considered the nominating ballot. Three fourths of the legal votes cast on the second ballot shall be necessary for election. The third ballot shall be limited to the seven persons (plus ties) who received the greatest number of legal votes on the second ballot, and two-thirds of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. The fourth ballot shall be limited to the three persons (plus ties) who receive the greatest number of legal votes on the third ballot, and 60 percent of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. On subsequent ballots a majority of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. These ballots shall be limited to the two persons (plus ties) who receive the greatest number of legal votes on the previous ballot.

S9.04.02 Other election matters, such as the process of identifying potential nominees leading to the election of a bishop, and the rules of procedure for the election of a bishop shall be specified in the continuing resolutions of the South Dakota Synod Constitution, as approved by the Synod Assembly one (1) year prior to the assembly at which a bishop is to be elected.

S9.04.A12 Process of Identifying Potential Nominees Leading to the Election of a Bishop:

1. An incumbent bishop shall announce to the Synod Council whether he or she is willing to serve a subsequent term. Such announcement shall take place no later than the Synod Council meeting in November prior to the Synod Assembly during which a bishop is to be elected.
2. The processes for identifying potential nominees for Bishop and election of a Bishop shall apply for all elections of a Bishop.
3. The Synod Council shall arrange for a synod study to be completed six months prior to the beginning of the election process. The synod study and any strategic planning adopted by the Synod Council shall be distributed to rostered members and congregations of the synod six months prior to the election, providing guidance throughout this synod as potential nominees for bishop are identified.

4. At the assembly of each conference prior to the election of a bishop, held no later than 75 days prior to Synod Assembly, the voting members will be asked to consider a set of topics developed by the Synod Council designed to clarify the vision for this synod's mission, the issues they deem important for this synod, and the gifts desirable and necessary in a bishop. The secretary of each conference shall provide minutes of this discussion to the secretary of the synod for use by the Synod Council.
5. At the same conference assembly, the voting members will be asked to identify currently rostered ELCA pastors whom the voting members believe have gifts desirable in a bishop. Identified pastors do not need to be members of the conference or of the South Dakota Synod. All ELCA pastors are encouraged to give permission to be considered in the discernment process.
6. After all voting members have had opportunity to identify potential nominees possessing gifts for the office of bishop, the voting members will, at the same assembly, engage in a process of their own determination to select up to three potential nominees, the names of whom are to be forwarded to the synod for inclusion among the potential nominees for the office of bishop.
7. The dean of each conference will contact the individuals selected by the conference to confirm their willingness to have their names included with those selected by all the conferences as possessing gifts for the office of bishop. If these individuals reaffirm their willingness to be so identified, the dean will facilitate their completion of a biographical information form developed by the Synod Council. The potential nominees are to submit these completed forms to the secretary of the synod within ten day of the conference assembly.
8. The secretary of the synod will post on the synod website 45 days before the Synod Assembly begins the names and biographical information of the potential nominees for the office of bishop selected by the conferences. Other information also may be posted.
9. While these individuals are identified as potential nominees for the office of bishop, the South Dakota Synod will continue to use the ecclesiastical ballot in which the name of any ELCA ordained minister may be placed in nomination on the first ballot. Any person identified as a potential nominee must still be nominated on the first ballot by a voting member at the assembly.
10. The Synod Assembly will adopt Rules of Procedure for the Election of a Bishop based upon the ecclesiastical ballot as required by the South Dakota Synod Constitution.

S9.04.B12 Rules for the Procedure for the Election of a Bishop

1. In accordance with the South Dakota Synod Constitution, the election of a bishop shall be by ecclesiastical ballot. There shall be no spoken nominations from the floor.
2. Any ordained minister in the ELCA is eligible for nomination for bishop. A valid ballot is to contain the nominee's full name as found in the clergy roster. All registered voting members of the South Dakota Synod Assembly shall be eligible to cast a ballot.
3. Three-fourths of the votes cast on the first ballot shall be necessary for the election of a bishop.
4. If no election occurs, the first ballot is the nominating ballot. This ballot becomes the total slate of nominees.
5. Clergy who are nominated on the nominating ballot and desire that their name be retained on subsequent ballots shall submit a complete biographical form to the secretary of the synod. This may be done electronically for candidates not present.
6. Clergy nominated on the first ballot shall have the right to withdraw their names from subsequent ballots before the casting of the second ballot. A form requesting the name to be withdrawn must be secured from the synod secretary and must be returned to the secretary of the synod by (insert time and day). This may be done electronically for candidates not present.
7. On the second and all subsequent ballots, the order of listing of the nominees on the ballot shall be from the greatest number of ballots cast to the least. Ties shall be listed alphabetically. Three-fourths of the votes cast on the second ballot shall be necessary for election.
8. Following the report of the second ballot, biographical data for the seven nominees (plus ties) who receive the greatest number of ballots cast on the second ballot shall be distributed to all voting members.
9. Before the casting of the third ballot, the seven nominees (plus ties) who receive the greatest number of ballots cast on the second ballot shall be invited to the stage and be introduced by name to the members of the assembly. There shall be no applause before, during, or after each individual introduction. After time has been allotted for all voting members to read the biographical information of the seven nominees (plus ties) will be invited to address the assembly on a subject of their own choosing, with each speech limited to five minutes. If any such person is not present at the assembly, the individual, if possible, may designate an alternate to speak on her or his behalf. A time keeper shall indicate to the speaker when 30 seconds remain of the allocated time and when the allocated time has elapsed. The sequence of the speeches shall be determined by lot. There shall be

no applause before, during, or after individual speeches; only after all have spoken is there to be such affirmation. There shall be ten minutes' time allotted after these speeches for voting members to engage in prayer, reflection on the speeches, and informal conversation with other voting members before the third ballot is cast.

10. Two-thirds of the vote shall be necessary for election on the third ballot.
11. Prior to the fourth ballot for synod bishop, the three persons (plus ties) who received the greatest number of votes on the third ballot will be invited to participate in a question- and-answer period. The period shall be moderated by the designated presider for the election process. The same six questions shall be asked of each of the nominees. Only one nominee shall be in the assembly room at a time. The order that the nominees shall appear on stage to answer the questions shall be determined by the draw of name. Each nominee shall have a maximum of two minutes to respond to each question. If any nominee is not present at the assembly, that individual, if possible, may designate an alternate to answer on her or his behalf. A time keeper will indicate to the speaker when 30 seconds remain of the allotted time and when the allotted time has ended.

Questions to be asked shall be determined by a committee appointed by the Synod Council. Any voting member of the Synod Assembly may submit questions in a sealed envelope to the secretary of the synod, or the secretary's designee (list date, day, and time certain for the deadline). The time for the question-and-answer period shall be a maximum of 45 minutes. There shall be no applause before, during, or after each answer; only after the question-and-answer period has come to an end is there to be such affirmation.

12. Prior to the casting of the fourth ballot, there will be time for prayer, reflection on the speeches, and informal conversation with other voting members. Sixty percent of the votes cast shall be necessary for election on the fourth ballot.
13. On ballots after the fourth ballot, the ballots shall be limited to the two nominees (plus ties) who receive the greatest number of votes cast.
14. On all subsequent ballots a majority of the votes cast shall be necessary for election.
15. The results of each ballot shall be printed, distributed, and announced to the assembly.

S9.04.10. The process of the nomination and election of the Synod Bishop shall be supervised by the Bishop Elections Committee which shall consist of three persons appointed by the Synod Council. The Bishop Elections Committee shall have final authority for all matters pertaining to the election.