**2025 Bishop Election Video Transcript**

Greetings members of the South Dakota Synod! My name is Carla Borchardt and I have the honor of serving as the chair of the Bishop Election Committee.

Electing a bishop is one of the most important responsibilities in the life of the synod. Although a voting process is used to elect a bishop, it is first and foremost a **call process**. We are invited and encouraged to seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit through prayer and thoughtful discussion.

The bishop will be elected by voting members at the Synod Assembly held May 30 and 31, 2025, at Our Savior’s Lutheran Church in Sioux Falls. The synod constitution states the bishop may serve two consecutive 6-year terms. Bishop Constanze Hagmaier will complete her first term this year. In compliance with continuing resolution S9.04.A18.1, Bishop Hagmaier has indicated her willingness to serve a subsequent term if re-elected.

The bishop election process consists of several steps. The first step was completion of a synod study. This document provides an overview of the synod and outlines hopes and expectations for the synod. You can find this resource on the synod website at sdsynod.org

All conferences will hold assemblies on Sunday, February 23rd. Those attending conference assemblies will participate in Bible study, review the synod study document and engage in conversation about our hopes, dreams, priorities, and challenges. They will also seek the Spirit’s guidance about pastors who have the desired gifts for the office of bishop. It is important to remember that this pre-identification process is not a nomination process.

Voting members at the 2025 Synod Assembly will elect the bishop using an ecclesiastical ballot, also called a nominating ballot. The name of any minister of word and sacrament on the roster of the ELCA can be written on the first ballot. Pastors nominated on the first ballot will be contacted by the Bishop Election Committee to determine their willingness to continue as a nominee.

The second ballot will consist of all those nominated on the first ballot, minus pastors who requested their names be removed. 75% of the votes cast are needed for an election on the second ballot.

If no one is elected on the second ballot, the names of the top 7 nominees will be placed on the third ballot. Two-thirds of the votes cast are needed for an election on the third ballot.

If no one is elected on the third ballot, the names of the top 3 nominees will be placed on the fourth ballot. 60% of the votes cast are needed for an election on the fourth ballot.

If no one is elected on the fourth ballot, the names of the top 2 nominees will be placed on the fifth ballot. A majority of votes are needed for an election on the fifth ballot.

There will be several opportunities to learn more about the nominees. The top 7 nominees will complete biographical forms which will be available for Synod Assembly participants. The 7 nominees each will have time to address the Assembly prior to the third ballot. The 3 nominees will participate in a question and answer session prior to the fourth ballot.

I’ve just shared a lot of detailed information with you. I encourage you to review materials under the bishop election section of the synod website at [www.sdsynod.org](http://www.sdsynod.org). A question and answer or Q&A document on the website more fully describes these processes.

The election of a bishop is a call process. Prayer is the foundation of this process where both the Synod Assembly voting members and nominees seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit to understand the needs of the synod and discern whom God is calling to leadership.

Join me in prayer…Come Holy Spirit, guide our hearts and minds that we may receive a faithful servant who will care for God’s people and equip us for our ministries. In the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen