

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION FORM
BISHOP OF THE SOUTH DAKOTA SYNOD, ELCA**

Pre-identified Potential Nominee

1. Name: Constanze Hagmaier

2. Current Position: Bishop

3. Congregation Membership: Hope Lutheran, Sioux Falls, SD

4. Date and Year of Birth: 11/30/1970

5. Date and Year of Ordination: 2/10/2001

6. Previous Positions:

2019 - Now Bishop of the South Dakota Synod, ELCA

2009 - 2019 Administrative Pastor at Trinity Lutheran, Madison, SD

2004 - 2009 Pastor at Salem Lutheran, Parkston, SD

2001 Interim Pastor at Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Aberdeen, SD

2001 - 2004 Pastor at Florence Lutheran Parish, Florence, SD

1999 - 2004 Pastor at Waubay Lutheran Parish, Waubay, SD

7. Education and Earned Degrees (with institutions and year, most recent first)

1999 Diplom Theologin from the Ruprecht Karl's University Heidelberg,
Germany (Master of Divinity)

1991 Abitur at the Gymnasium Walsrode, Germany (High School Degree)

8. List up to five (5) current or past synod or churchwide activities that would inform your service as bishop of this synod.

Current:

- Conference of Bishops
- Roster Committee
- On Leave From Call and Specialist Ministry Task Force

Past:

- Conference of Bishops Rural Ministry Strategy Table, chair
- Sierra Pacific Synod Listening Team

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

Current:

- Executive Committee and board member for Lutheran Social Services (LSS) of South Dakota

Past:

- Founding member of the Parkston Community Food Pantry and Backpack Program
- Member of the Lake County Food Pantry Board representing the Madison Central School District Backpack Program
- Salvation Army liaison for Lake County
- Lutherans Outdoors in South Dakota executive and board member

10. What gifts would you bring to the office of bishop of this synod?

- **Faithfulness** - I adhere to three core values in my life's vocations: 1. I am faithful to God; 2. I am devoted to being a daughter, spouse, mother, and pastor/bishop; and 3. I am committed to loving God's people.
- **Cradle Lutheran** - I am firmly rooted in our Lutheran heritage and identity.
- **Team Builder** - I am talented at bringing people together, inspiring them, and guiding them towards a common goal.
- **Listener** - I can better understand people and build stronger relationships to foster allyship among God's people by genuinely listening.
- **Fast Learner** - I quickly grasp new concepts, allowing me to respond thoughtfully in complex situations.
- **Problem Solver** - I identify challenges and seek practical solutions.
- **Critical Thinker** - I think clearly and rationally, using evidence to conclude.

11. What is the principal challenge to this synod in the next six (6) years, and how would you address it?

The South Dakota Synod urgently needs adaptability amid shifting congregational demographics and evolving spiritual needs within the ELCA. With declining worship attendance and fewer children in congregations, my team has focused on bolstering children's ministry. By securing an additional Lilly Grant, we are poised to fund innovative experiments and collaborate with child development specialists over the next four years.

Financial limitations also challenge congregations, as nearly half struggle to afford a full-time pastor, resulting in increasing pastoral vacancies, especially among smaller congregations. To address this, we introduced shared leadership models that have effectively reduced the number of congregations in transition over the past six years. Additionally, our Learning Management System—launched through our first SD Synod Lilly Grant—provides rostered and lay leaders with free courses, a resource catalog, and a collaborative space for learning and fellowship.

Amid internal theological debates and rising calls for transparency in the ELCA, I have fostered open dialogue and informed decision-making inspired by Romans 12, ensuring that every voice is valued under Christ's headship. Those without denominational affiliation and the surge in spiritual seekers are an opportunity to explore new ways of being church. This shift demands bold vision and adaptive leadership.

In this spirit, we have been invited to partner with Wartburg Seminary to study rural ecclesiology, reflecting on how changes in rural communities influence church practice. Supported by a Lilly Grant, this initiative positions us to pursue a synod grant that nurtures Christ-centered communities rooted in Word and Sacrament while embracing societal transformation. I look forward to exploring emerging ministry models—small community gatherings, house churches, and the anchor church model—as we follow the Spirit's leading with integrity, openness, and resilience.

12. Describe your leadership style.

I strive to lead by example, demonstrating adaptability while remaining firmly rooted in our synod's ministry, mission, and core values. Rather than preserving the status quo or longing for the past, I embrace change as an opportunity for renewal. I foster a culture of creativity and collaboration, equipping staff and volunteers to approach challenges as opportunities for growth, personally and as the body of Christ. In times of uncertainty, I lead with vision, integrity, and courage, ensuring our synod remains responsive, resilient, and faithful to God's calling. By listening deeply, discerning boldly, and acting decisively, I guide our synod toward a future where innovation and tradition work together to serve the Gospel. I hope to journey with you in Christ for another six years.