Virginia Synod Survey for Bishop Election Results
February 2017
N=536; percentages reported unless noted

1. Using the scale provided, please tell us your feelings about the future of...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>very pessimistic</th>
<th>pessimistic</th>
<th>neutral</th>
<th>optimistic</th>
<th>very optimistic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. your congregation.</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
<td>40.8%</td>
<td>29.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. the Virginia Synod.</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
<td>53.2%</td>
<td>27.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. the future of the ELCA.</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
<td>13.4%</td>
<td>51.4%</td>
<td>25.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. What do you believe are the three strongest ministries of the Virginia Synod working together with your congregation? %

- Acts: 21.8
- Campus Ministry: 12.9
- Healthy Leadership and Wellness: 13.8
- Lutheran Men in Mission: 3.7
- Our Mission Partners (Caroline Furnace, Gracelnside, Hungry Mother, Lutheran Family Services, Southern Seminary, National Lutheran Communities, Roanoke College, VA Lutheran Homes): 52.2
- Papua New Guinea Partnership: 8.6
- Power in the Spirit: 44.8
- Root and Wings: 5.4
- Tapestry: 1.7
- VA Feeds Kids: 12.9
- Women of the ELCA: 22.0
- Youth Ministry (Bishop's school, Kairos, Launch, Lost and Found, Theology for Teens, Winter Celebration, Youth Assembly): 74.6

3. What do you think are the three ministries that should be emphasized by the Virginia Synod and your congregation in the coming years %

- Acts: 14.9
- Campus Ministry: 21.6
- Healthy Leadership and Wellness: 34.1
- Lutheran Men in Mission: 6.7
- Our Mission Partners (Caroline Furnace, Gracelnside, Hungry Mother, Lutheran Family Services, Southern Seminary, National Lutheran Communities, Roanoke College, VA Lutheran Homes): 44.8
- Papua New Guinea Partnership: 6.5
- Power in the Spirit: 29.7
- Root and Wings: 8.0
- Tapestry: 7.5
- VA Feeds Kids: 23.3
- Women of the ELCA: 13.4
- Youth Ministry (Bishop's school, Kairos, Launch, Lost and Found, Theology for Teens, Winter Celebration, Youth Assembly): 68.7

4. How well...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1 - not at all</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5 - very</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. does your congregation reach out to people in your community?</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>25.3</td>
<td>31.7</td>
<td>28.9</td>
<td>3.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. do you feel you understand the functions of the Virginia Synod?</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>37.0</td>
<td>27.1</td>
<td>3.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. do you feel you understand the activities of the Virginia Synod?</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>24.6</td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td>24.8</td>
<td>3.73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Using the list below, identify the strengths and gifts you think will be most important for the effectiveness of the new bishop. Please look through the list of gifts first, then choose the five (5) gifts you feel are most important.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gift</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>49.6</td>
<td>Ministry with seniors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building community</td>
<td>29.7</td>
<td>Multicultural ministry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children, youth and family ministry</td>
<td>31.7</td>
<td>Pastoral care of pastors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian education</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>Preaching/worship leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict management</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>Social ministry and Public policy advocacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of leaders</td>
<td>40.5</td>
<td>Stewardship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecumenical relations</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>Strategic planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evangelism and mission</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>Theological interpretation and teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial management</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>Working with congregations during crisis and transition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global mission</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>Worship/preaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovation and creativity</td>
<td>22.8</td>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media and communication</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry in daily life</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry with seniors</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multicultural ministry</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastoral care of pastors</td>
<td>46.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preaching/worship leadership</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social ministry and Public policy advocacy</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stewardship</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic planning</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theological interpretation and teaching</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working with congregations during crisis and transition</td>
<td>49.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worship/preaching</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. Tell us your gender. %

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>44.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>52.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer not to specify</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not listed above</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. Are you a: %

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rostered Person</td>
<td>33.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lay Person</td>
<td>63.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9. Tell us your age. %

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 17</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-24</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-44</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-54</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-64</td>
<td>29.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65-74</td>
<td>27.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75 or older</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10. How many years have you attended an ELCA congregation in the Virginia Synod? %

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1 year</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 to 5 years</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 to 10 years</td>
<td>9.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 to 15 years</td>
<td>9.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 to 20 years</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 to 25 years</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 25 years</td>
<td>49.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11. Please describe your current community context. %

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>20.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small town (less than 10,000)</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small city (between 10,000 and 49,999)</td>
<td>27.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium city (between 50,000 and 250,000)</td>
<td>33.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12. How have you and/or you congregation interacted with the bishop in the last six years?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interaction Type</th>
<th>% You</th>
<th>% Congregation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attended a congregational meeting</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>38.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Came to my congregation (visited or preached)</td>
<td>43.8</td>
<td>73.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct contact (one on one)</td>
<td>51.9</td>
<td>28.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funeral (preached or attended)</td>
<td>24.8</td>
<td>18.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power in the Spirit</td>
<td>29.1</td>
<td>32.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synod Assembly</td>
<td>58.0</td>
<td>56.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Events</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>43.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Virginia Synod Survey for Bishop Election
Conducted between September 2016 and February 2017
via a web page, email invitation, and paper questionnaire
6. If you have other thoughts or comments on these issues, please share them with us below.

- would like a more moderate bishop. I am NOT a conservative, but, VA Synod and ELCA have become a bit too liberal from my perspective.
- While all of the above subjects are important, there are others on Bishop's staff to help / be responsible for many of them, with Bishop's input / awareness.
- We will need a transformational leader who can inspire, especially as there seems to be a lot of anxiety over change and a culture resistant to it in our synod. Bold Decision Making - we need a leader who is unafraid to take risks, strike out, and move forward - strategic thinking is critical. We often have and do hesitate as a synod to make changes because there have been conflict-avoidant tendencies in our leadership. We cannot do everything - what is God calling us to do? Progressive/Future Oriented - We need a bishop who understands the roots of our church but is looking towards the future which will look much different. The bishop will need to be progressive in all senses of the
- We offer very little in the way of Christian activities for young families and as such have very few children or young adults worshiping from Sunday to Sunday. We need to move away from social issues and more into bringing people to belief in Christ and the trinity. Politics and social issues are personal to everyone and should never be preached from the pulpit!!! My Great grandfather was a Lutheran missionary from Denmark to the Virgin Islands and we have always been traditional Lutherans through all the incarnations of the ELCA. If you look at the demographics of congregations you will find that most of their members are over 50 years of age and a lot are 70. This is not very encouraging.
- We need someone who can relate well with people across the theological and political spectrum.
- We need someone to keep us together and focused on our mission of proclaiming Christ crucified and resurrected.
- We must have someone who can speak openly and honestly to the rise of the 'nones' (religious affiliation - 'none') in our society. Why the church is still relevant and needed in our personal lives, communities and society. This education (above list) is needed for all members, not just kids.
- We live in an anxious age. We need a bishop who can help leaders (both pastors and lay leaders) think clearly and creatively about the challenges we face. We need a leader who will be both thoughtful in decision making as well as direct in communicating as we navigate our changing world, changing culture and changing Church.
- We have been fortunate in having a series of wonderful loving caring leaders. We should try to continue this tradition.
- VA Synod needs to seriously consider closing and merging churches. Or perhaps look at a different way to minister to congregations such as changing how we fund ministers. It is too expensive to fund pastors and the structure needs to be reformed. Perhaps uncoupling administering communion from the clerical collar would be a good step.
- Unfortunately our congregations, for the most part, are still living in a Christian worldview mindset and are "comfortable", even though numbers and vitality are rapidly declining. We need more urgency from our leadership in understanding the fast pace changes in society and becoming fast on our feet to address the hurts of the world. WE NEED A NEW VISION. Committee meetings like they've always been done doing ministry the way we've always done it will only lead to our inevitable demise. Unfortunately, we've already seen the writing on the wall with the secularization of Europe. In order to continue to be a thriving church that actually addresses the issues of the day we have to seek out a
- Too many families are becoming inactive members.
- This is a tough one! There are so many areas that need attention. I don't see Leadership listed here. I believe overall leadership gifts (in contrast to management) are necessary to be effective as the Synod's chief pastor, theologian, direction-setter, and disciple. My next five, in no particular order, would be multicultural ministry, worship/preaching (or preaching/worship leadership - not sure if these are to be the same or different), working with congregations in crisis/transition, Christian education, stewardship, and ministry in daily life.
This is a time of great transition within our culture and, therefore, within our Synod. We are going to need someone who is knows both the benefits and limits of modern technology and culture, but is also thoroughly grounded in grace by faith and how the meaning of that is newly taking shape, the sins and shortcomings of human beings, and the life to which we are called. As a retired pastor, I know the value of having a bishop who loved his church, his pastors, and the people they both served. That means, our next bishop should be able to love that openly, but also grapple with both the old paradigms and the new ones that are taking shape—in the church, in his pastors (current and comi

This is a terribly difficult time for the organized Christian Mainline Church - regardless of denomination. Unfortunately, declining membership (indeed, even any real interest in anything 'church'), and damage - severe damage - done (or allowed to be done) by the media-savvy conservative, fundamental "TV Church" to the image of "what IS a church" may be Unsalvageable. Our new Bishop must be able to engage younger people who have "written off" the Church as too cumbersome, too 'hypocritical' or simply irrelevant to the 21st Century in ways that impact their specific lives and that about which they care with the unreserved Love of Christ which will truly mak a difference in the culture

There's a desperate need to open the Synod's doors to a broader circle of lay and clergy leaders. The cabal that has held sway for too long holds too much power and influence.

There were way too few choices for question # 5. The synod has a huge job along with the leadership and each member of every congregation. I do not believe it is up to synod to address all of these needs, however, synod needs to be aware of all the resources available and the talents of the parishes. Whew, a big job. But, not as big if the resources are known and utilized.

There are more than 5 that are most important. Pastoral care of pastors, strategic planning

There are many good and strong things about the ministry of the Virginia Synod. However, I feel there's a disconnect between the way people perceive the Synod and the reality of our ministry. Many Synod "insiders" believe we are the greatest synod in the ELCA, with the best ministries that are the envy of the whole church. In reality, we are one of the smaller synods and the trends in our congregations are not particularly strong. We need to change and we need a leader willing to speak the truth and break through some of the many sacred cows in our life together. There is an anxiety present in this synod such that any talk about the reality of certain things is met with defensiveness,

The Virginia Synod is well respected for its Youth ministry and the thoughtfulness of its theological interpretation. The current staff is well positioned to support and enhance programs in flight, such as Forwarding Faith, Youth, communications and support for congregations around the synod. My prayer would be that a prospective bishop views these as valuable and retains the talented personnel guiding these ministries. Facing the future, we see a world where ecumenical and interfaith relations are more crucial than ever. A bridge builder in our state and synod is needed to reflect the changing demographics of Virginia. The 40-somethings and younger are more skeptical than ever of institu

The Virginia Synod has a rich history of quality programs for youth. I believe this tradition could continue. I believe it is imperative to the future of the church. The children, youth, college students, and young adults must be given significant priority. The church will need to adapt and find creative and meaningful ways to continue to engage that group.

The Synod needs to focus on helping churches evangelize and grow congregations. I belong to a congregation with all old people and now young folks. I am afraid the congregation will be extinct if there is not some new blood.

The survey should have given an opportunity to discuss what current ministries of the synod might need to be concluded. The survey should have given an opportunity to offer suggestions for new ministry ventures of the synod that might support and enhance the ministries of congregations.

The next bishop needs to have a grasp of ministry in a rapidly changing, globalized, multi-cultural world. A bishop who can cultivate leaders who lead congregations to do "theology in context" leading to ministry that expresses and witnesses to the gospel within local community. Also, the next bishop must be able to build a staff less heavy on administrative tasks and more on leading and assisting congregations and leaders to be the
church in the world, and be willing to expand, add, and change models of ministry, leadership, etc. as necessary in order to be the Body of Christ in today's world.

- The new bishop should recognize and utilize the people and resources already functioning well and put energy into changing those things that need to be changed. Trust new folks with responsibility, and engage and respect the contributions of the laity.
- The new bishop should be able to help especially newly called pastors to understand the type of ministry he or she will encounter in their first parish.
- The new bishop needs to focus on the future of the church so it doesn't die out. Hence a focus on children and families and diversity in our congregations.
- The new bishop can help the synod staff develop a resource center (ie NW Synod of WI online resource center) for congregations and rostered leaders.
- The individuals that the new bishop selects for key roles on his/her team may free the person up from administrative minutiae (conflict management, financial management, media and communication, stewardship and so forth) so that the individual may focus on Christian Formation, development of leaders, ecumenical relationships, and helping the synod to develop strong roots in the Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions.
- The future of the ELCA will be determined by how judicatories engage with ecumenical ministry partners while claiming the unique lens of Lutheran polity. Smaller churches have to change their model to thrive. Larger churches need to partner with smaller neighboring churches providing resources and support. Your best partner may be another church in full communion.
- The ELCA gives such a long "to do" list of church maintenance duties that I don't see how a Synod Bishop can be innovative or creative, or immersed in theological interpretation and teaching. A Synod Bishop cannot fulfill those institutional expectations and also have the time for deep reflection and idea gathering that comes from spending leisure time with God. I would like to see our next Synod bishop say "no" to some of these meeting and travel demands, to practice Sabbath as a model for the rest of us, to take the time to receive nourishment in prayer and study.
- The call of the bishop is specific and the bishop's gifts should respond to that. The bishop's staff is crucial and it needs to be funded by congregations. I see a big gap in needs by the office of the bishop and giving by congregations to the synod. There is a disconnect between synod and congregations. The bishop's job is not administration or financial management. Those things can be handled by staff. An interim period between bishops would be crucial (just like for congregations) but I don't see much support for that. Would it be a time saving idea to note those pastors in the synod who just cannot be considered for various reasons? I think many would put down their names with valid re
- The Bishop should be willing to admit the shortcomings of the clergy. A minister nearly destroyed my church. Lay members tried to inform the Dean and Bishop but the minister was allowed to continue to do harm to the church and its members. The situation was so dire that one member discussed it with ELCA Presiding Bishop Eaton, who provided insight and encouragement, at least. The new Bishop needs to see the facts as they are, not as he or she wishes they might be. He or she needs to find the truth where it lies, whether with clergy, or laity, or elsewhere. The Bishop also needs to rein in ministers whose motivation is more political than spiritual. We are a church, not a political a
- The Bishop needs to be doing the things no one else can do. We can hire people to do youth, children, elder ministry, etc... Bishop needs to be about finding new pastors, supporting the ones we have - being the pastors' pastor. Seeing that congregations are being well cared for by the pastors, making sure each congregation knows the Synod knows they exist and cares about them. But the Bishop also oversees all that goes on in the Synod offices and thus must have good administrative skills as well.
- The above choices assume the bishop has staff and lay committee folk with complementary strengths.
- stayed focused on Jesus  every day making disciples esp 1/3rd of life  mission and evangelism = NEW frontiers
- Some of these categories overlap. If you are good at building community, you should also be good at working with congregations and managing conflict. I believe that the biggest challenge in this area is getting congregations to know one another because we may need to combine or close some churches.
procedures, forms, processes w/in synod need updating to reflect current practices-administrative attention--not necessarily Bishop’s job

Our youth ministry in the Va Synod is strong and amazing. I want to know that our new bishop understands the importance of engaging all of our youth from the very beginnings.

Our small ELCA congregations in Virginia cannot offer all the things the big box non-denominational big box churches have. Thus we have to be strong in providing something unique. Our theology is different but most people in the community have no idea about those difference and how important they are. We need to do a better job of showing the world our belief in grace especially in this time of political craziness.

Our next bishop needs to present a clear, bold and optimistic vision for God’s creative presence within a changing world and changing church. Maintaining the status quo will not be helpful.

Our congregation numbers are declining which is putting additional stress on our being able to meet our financial needs. As a matter of fact, it is a strong possibility that we may only be able to afford a part time pastor in the very near future. We are faced with how we meet our own financial needs and continue to financially support the Synod.

Our church council and pastor has not contacted members who are listed on the rolls, but do not attend or participate in church for years. I was very active in our church and have not been active for the past year. and I have not heard from the pastor or church council in over a year. The Lutheran church needs to be active in contacting the members or they will go elsewhere which is why we are having a decline in membership. Members need to feel wanted and useful to their churches. I think this is why you see members leaving and going to churches where they are contacted on a regular basis like some of the non denominational churches.

Our Bishop must be an exemplar of Christian virtue - as Bishop Mauney has been.

Our Bishop is the head of the VIRGINIA synod. As such, he should be involved with ALL things in the synod, but he should take on special leadership in strategic areas. There are committees and projects that he can promote, but he doesn't need to lead them all. He should support the world wide missions of the ELCA, but he doesn't need to lead those missions. His is a limited area - VIRGINIA. He mostly needs to be able to motivate the congregations and their leaders to be involved, caring and supportive of the VIRGINIA missions and the ELCA world wide missions.

Our Bishop has worked in a positive manner that has touched so many areas of our Synod. It is a very special position and we all have been so very fortunate to have such a mentor and leader.

One area that I feel needs attention is the Synod's response to the congregations of the Synod. Often when the Synod is consulted on an issue the Synod does not respond. I believe the Synod's primary function should be to support and help the individual congregations of the Synod.

My pessimism comes from the clear aging of the congregations - it is not a reflection on our church or the synod, but a comment on the nature of our culture.

My hope and prayer is for our new bishop to have gifts discerning how we as a predominantly white church reach out to the full diversity of our neighbors. And I don’t mean just having a task force and making a token effort. In the Beatitudes Jesus draws those on the margins into the center and de-centers those of us who are accustomed to positions of privilege. What does that look like for us as a church take Jesus' call seriously? I look at how people of color have been drawn to Pentecostal and non-denominational churches, even as mainline churches such as the ELCA have been intentionally talking about inclusion and diversity. There is a disconnect between what we say we believe at the ch

My concerns for the VA Synod and ELCA are rooted in the local congregations. While I am optimistic about the future of the congregation I serve after three years of measurable growth and reasonable stability, I still see worship attendance trending down. Weekly worship attendance seems to be a thing of the past and monthly worship attendance seems to have replaced the old, very old pattern of worship. In our congregation we receive 25 percent of our offering electronically, but offering and generosity has dropped with attendance. As people build community in 100 different ways outside of church and people’s connection to the life of a congregation gets weaker and weaker, we can only ex
• My biggest concern is a statement that my son made a few months ago, when I asked him something about when he was going to find a church in his new town. He said something to the effect of: "The Lutheran church doesn't offer anything to young adults that are not involved in campus ministry anymore. If you're not a youth or an established adult or family, the church isn't reaching out. The Virginia Synod has such a robust youth program, an ok campus ministry program, and nothing for our vulnerable, young adults beyond helping out in the youth programs. We're losing our young people until they marry, have kids and return as families. We're missing something!

• My big concern about the Virginia Synod is that it has been an 'old boy' network for as long as I have been in central Virginia. My concerns include the lack of emphasis on good theological discussion at the congregational level, lack of emphasis on careful use of inclusive language in the prayers, songs, and skits used in our camps, youth ministry events, Power In the Spirit, and Synod Assembly

• My answers presuppose that the bishop will effectively find others who have gifts that he does not have. So, for example, fiscal management is essential, but I am assuming he/she can and will find folks who are better at this than one trained in theology and pastoral care.

• more involvement of bishop with individuals congregations

• Keep communication flowing! Even if we don't respond, you are at least telling us what is going on! Thanks for letting us give some input! Many simply do not care, but I, personally, want to know and be involved!

• I think it is really important that the Bishop visit each congregation at some time during his first year to make himself (herself) known and available.

• It's imperative to grow, because the other alternative is stagnation. For long term growth, we must embrace children and young adults. For the near term, we need families to provide the dynamism and energy we require to prosper in our Christian mission.

• It’s been striking to me how little emphasis there is on strategic planning and mission in the synod's priorities.

• It would be helpful for the Bishop to visit the congregations in the synod. It seems that he is an absentee leader - never seen, rarely heard from other than general news, no personal connection.

• It is shameful that we have such a poor representation in our synod of reconciling congregations. We need to reach out and truly welcome those who have been marginalized by society, using the example of Christ who routinely ministered specially to those on the outside. Absent such an outreach, the job of our next bishop will likely include consolidating congregations, closing those that are declining, in order to strengthen those who look outward at our broken world with a desire to make a difference in the lives of people.

• It is difficult to chose only 5 from the above list. Part of the equation is to discern what does the bishop need to have strength in and which are carried by the staff the bishop is surrounded by. Worship is the most important objective of the church. The work we do flows from worship. I am a bit stymied by how a bishop best does that. The bishop is the leader of the leaders, and yet I feel it advisable that the bishop is an approachable person to all members of the church. The bishop is the person that the leadership of the congregation turns to in difficult situations or for advise on how to move forward in engaging the community.

• Improve our ability to reach out to the unchurched people in our neighborhoods and share the Gospel with them. More leadership in the educational programs of our congregations (Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, Youth groups, Off-site programs, Bible study groups, Confirmation Class, etc)

• Important that the new Bishop has a close understanding of the present condition and direction of the Synod under Bishop Mauney and build on this foundation. Being a pastoral bishop who understands administration is also more important than one who is grounded in administration.

• If we want to continue to grow and prosper as a church, we need to continue to work with the youth in our congregations, stress the importance of working within multicultural ministry, (lately I feel like I'm back in the 60's), take care of our pastors, with the shortage of clergy we need to make sure their needs are met: salary, benefits, ample vacation and family time, church councils and lay leaders need to take on more responsibility of the daily operations of the church and let them know they are appreciated. Churches need to lead the way in
taking care of the poor and sick. Start and support programs in your community that help to feed children and elders, start a parish nurse program.

- I've so admired Bishop Mauney's contagious Love for the Lord Jesus, and the way he passes that on for adults and youth. He knows how to include the true Gospel of Jesus in his sermons, and orthodox Lutheran biblical theology in his approach to discussions. As a 65-year-old, life-long Lutheran, this is important to me, with Evangelism and Mission as Number One, acknowledging the Great Commission. Next in line to those I checked: Preaching/worship; working with stressed congregations.

- I'm not sure we need to necessarily be trying to elect the next 18 yr. bishop. Maybe we need an interim bishop to help us discern a new direction and deal with this transition which we haven't done in a long time as a synod. Regardless of whether the next bishop serves for 6 years or 60 years, they need to be bold--about the gospel, about standing up for leaders, supporting congregations, and being open to trying new things as we move towards a more missional strategic plan for how to be church in the 21st century.

- I'd like to see someone who can inspire community concern and service responsibilities in congregations and other gatherings of Lutherans because of the grace we share. This person must be a dynamic speaker/preacher to reach both rostered and lay leaders. I would think (in order to survive the responsibilities of this office) that the Bishop needs a sense of humor and can be comfortable in this position.

- I would value a Bishop who was willing to use the gifts of the pastors in the Synod for many of the different aspects of the work of ministry in the Synod. I would value a Bishop who thinks outside of the box born from a passion for Jesus (not that Jim doesn't, he does of course). What I mean is that a passion for the Gospel is THE MOST IMPORTANT ASPECT THAT I AM LOOKING FOR! We need a vision, yes, but a simpler vision. Growing Disciples, period. We don't necessarily need a 20 pt. strategic plan but strategic passion! Invest in young people and campus ministries, invest in families and helping them grow discipleship within the family, invest in mission (i.e. starting worshiping commun

- I would like to see the Synod under the new Bishops leadership and hopefully with funding lead a team of under the age of 35 in a process of brainstorming and planning for how the church should be in community in the future. How can we create and give a significant portion of our time, talent and support to looking at new models of witness and serving. Let’s stop trying to re-invent the old and instead start with a clean slate and the energy and creativity to think outside of way we have always done church.

- I would like to have an opportunity to have conversation with those Pastors who feel they have the gifts to be the next Bishop. To elect a Bishop in a few days at Synod Assembly just becomes a popularity contest and an exercise in who has the best presentation. We need to go beyond that superficial level and hear a vision from those who believe they are called to this position.

- I want a bishop who will: * surround him/herself with support staff who compliment their own gifts ie strong administrative staff if bishop is weak in administration * a bishop who is dedicated to increasing and expanding skills through continuing education * a bishop who will stand with the rostered and lay leaders in times of conflict or in the presence of toxic situations * someone who has good personal boundaries - ie takes regular days off, takes all their vacation, models a healthy work/life balance * someone who has a plan to develop and fully utilize the gifts and talents of VA Synod rostered leaders * has a vision for the future, sets goals and measures progress toward those goals

- I think it is important that the Bishop visits and knows the congregations in the Synod and the people know him. We feel connected that way and the past Bishop and present one have done this and I would like to see it continue.

- I serve as an assistant to the bishop in the Delaware Maryland synod even though I live in va. I think it is essential that a Bishop understand WHY we do what WE do. It is a Bishop's job to put business, conflict, outreach.... in the lens of being GOD's people:saved, redeemed, following.

- I selected development of leaders that I interpret to include pastoral care for pastors. As we look at the formalization of the Diaconal ministry, the Bishop’s pastoral care will also be needed for these leaders. I also expect that multicultural ministry is embraced within a focus on ministry in daily life. I do not value the
expectation that congregations need to experience crisis before there is intervention by the Bishop -
congregations during transition embraces all situations.

- I really feel that there are more than 3 important areas of work. I mentioned Power in the Spirit as one of the 3
  most effective areas and leaving it out of the "important" list in no way meant that I do not feel it is important. I
  feel that the focus of Roots and Wings is also important, as are the others listed. I also feel that one of the
  efforts in our Synod which has been very effective, more so at some times than others, is the work with rostered
  leaders' spouses. The Church Vocations Conferences, including the work with spouses in that context have been
  very meaningful... strong... to me, also.

- I highly value the categories children, youth, and family ministry but would not want a bishop overlapping what
  a dedicated staff person is already doing. Equally so I would have media and communication in the top 5 but
  not if we continue to have a communications person on staff.

- I feel very strong about the involvement of the bishop and their staff when a church is in need of support when a
  church is in a crisis situation and during a call process and vacancies. I do not feel the current bishop/staff has
  provided the guidance/support needed in this area. Congregations are left to act on their own with little
  knowledge as to the proper procedures. I feel there should be more interaction from the synod during times of
  crisis when a congregation is in need.

- I feel the future Bishop needs to be a lot more visible than Bishop Mauney. That is, the Bishop should visit each
  church in the Virginia Synod at least once a year (on a weekday is fine). Also, the Bishop should try to worship
  with each church at least once in a 2-3 year period. We also need to be more innovative and creative in our
  church services. More contemporary church music is needed and sermon's should speak to how scripture
  relates to people's challenges that they face every day. The bishop should be leading this effort to "modernize"
  our worship services. I also feel that the new bishop needs to be someone who embraces new technology and is
  able to use social media to reach

- I feel that you need to be able to meet both the needs of a new young family and the growing children and all
  their life requirements of today. BUT we also need to meet the needs of our Senior Community and realize that
  they are not all about the social media that we have to offer today. It is really like two types of Congregational
  Outreach for one Community.

- I do think that the VA Synod Newsletter that we receive by email is a good communication tool. Re: these
  strengths and gifts, the other staff in the VA Synod Office need to complement the strengths and needs of the
  Bishop to meet the total package of strengths for our congregations, the Synod, and the National ELCA. Many
  of the programs that were mentioned are ones that I am not familiar with, possibly because I am part of a
  smaller congregation, and one that has several of its own ministries. We seem to be less aware of or less
  informed of some of these programs which could be our responsibility or that of Synod outreach/promotion to
  us as well.

- I believe Virginia synod is very strong with programs and leadership. The bishop needs to be ready available to
  all congregations even the northern ones.

- I believe there will be a tug of war for the Bishop that s/he will need to negotiate - a need to help the Church be
  light on its feet in the midst of a changing time, while also staying true to the gospel of Jesus Christ and its 2000
  year truth. We're also an aging Church that needs to care for the seniors in our midst, that somehow also needs
  to be, again, light on its feet to be innovative in welcome and in service and justice.

- I believe that I understand the functions and activities of the VA Synod as a result of having served many years
  on a Synod Team. However, I do not believe that my congregation understands these functions and activities.
  (It's difficult to do so if one has not been directly involved in Synod committee work.) Does everyone in the
  Synod receive the weekly newsletter? If not, this would be a wonderful way to let people become better
  acquainted with the Synod's functioning and work.

- I believe an episcopal leader needs to clearly possess both the gift of administration and the gift of pastoral care.
  I don't think it can be one or the other. The nature of this role requires knowing how to lead and manage
  people in an "organization". The leader needs to have excellent listening skills and be willing and able to deal
  with conflict, confronting individuals by speaking the truth in love when necessary. The person should be a
visionary with a creative mind - forward thinking - and have openness to try new things and consider new ways of doing ministry.

- I also think there is a strong continuing need for pastoral care of pastors. They teach congregation members, care for us by being there for us, especially during times of need (death in the family, etc.), lead and encourage us, give us a stronger understanding of worship, and the like. As a pastor's widow, I know how exhausting all of this work can be, and yet how incredibly necessary. My spouse was well cared for by our congregation, the local churches, and the Synod. Pastors need support. I think that they generally receive it, but with this opportunity to comment on the care of those who serve, I appreciate this opportunity to encourage care of pastors.

- greater need - communication about the functions of the synod (who is responsible for what?); more involvement with individual churches; more communication with leaders of other religions

- Good list to select from.

- God will bless us with that which we need according to His will.

- I really enjoy my pastor however, judging from his age, I imagine he will leave before long. It seems as if there are people in the congregation who think the way the church is going is okay. If they think ahead a little bit, they would realize we will be in the very same place we were prior to this pastor unless we can develop some strategies that will help us grow. We need to be very kind to the community, hold cake walks, (etc) to make some money and then give the money to a deserving charity (if we are not in crisis). There are so many more things that can be done...I'm too tired to think!

- Does understanding mean agreement. I may understand what the church/synod is doing, but don’t always agree. We have gotten away from scripture more than I often feel comfortable with, but I do love so many things about being in my church community.

- Development of ways to attract millennials and generation x to the church through nontraditional worship. It would also be nice to have some ideas on ways to incorporate technology into the traditional church setting.

- Continue in the example that Bishop Mauney has made.

- Congregational Christian education of children and youth will be ineffective without discipling of adults and parents.

- Children, Youth and Family are important because they are our future church! If they don't learn about Jesus as the Son of God then they will be totally lost in this world! Jesus is our future! We are nothing without Jesus! Christian Education should be the basis for learning about Jesus and his life so we will never depart from it no matter what age we are! Media and communication are most important for everyone so we can share our ideas, needs and wants, desires and direction of future endeavors of the church (people and community). Pastoral Care of pastors is really important to ensure their physical, mental and emotional health issues are met, and taken care of well!

- Bishop Mauney (the bish as we called him at youth gatherings) has been so involved with the youth over the years, anything less will be an injustice to the position. The new bishop doesn't have to sing pharoah pharoah, but something engaging at youth events to show they care is necessary.

- Be out in the community and in the VA churches, meeting people and being very visible.

- Attention needs to be paid to the observations and ideas of people like Dr. Kenneth Lose, Congregational redevelopment/renewal, and recognition of the Synod as part of the family systems/institutional theory that is applied to congregations. Learning to articulate grounding in Christ as the root of our fine social ministry and our daily lives is particularly needed. We are now looking at 2 generations of people living and/or raised outside of religious organizations.

- as above, the community(neighborhood) needs youth activities during the summer months. Sports, reading skills, understanding team work, thus they'll have the feeling of accomplishment. This is very important for our youth in today's world. ACCOMPLISHMENT!
As a current YAGM, I think the Va Synood has done a lot for global issues but especially with everything going on with the changes in government, I think the new Bishop needs to be global minded; s/he needs to be able to make an impact abroad, whether that is with statement against certain policies or with actions or ‘firing up’ and encouraging our congregants to do more. I believe this also translates to building community. The stronger we are as a community, the more we can get done. I feel that the youth programs are an amazing way to keep our community growing. I know from experience that going to go to youth events broadens your friends, allows you to see new viewpoints and perspect

As a bishop this is a tough survey to complete at a distance. 1-4 are based on impressions more than experiences. 5 is a reminder of how this calling is an impossible possiblity...only by God's grace do we keep moving forward.

Although I retired from my parish of 16 years at the end of 2015, I remain active in meetings of my local conference and follow happenings around the Synod through emails and postings on the Synod webpage. Outgoing Bishop Mauney and his staff, as well as countless volunteers, have made my crossover in ministry from the Presbyterian church a great joy. It has been an incomparable privilege to see the Lord at work in you all and to find myself at the foot of the cross with genuine saints. May God's extravagant generosity in grace continue to sustain our lives together no matter where our separate paths may take us. I love you as I love myself; but above all, I love the Lord.

Allow the survey to prioritize each of the above categories so the future Bishop would have a ideal where to concentrate her or his efforts. For example: working with congregation during crisis and transition is not a priority for my congregation but for three congregations in our conference.

All of these gifts are critical to our synod leadership. The bishop needs to be the visionary and leader who can surround herself/himself with gifted leaders in the specific areas listed here in order to spread the word and help us continue to grow and reach out to others. The bishop needs to clearly see the global picture of the synod, our strengths and weaknesses, and inspire other leaders, lay leaders, and parishioners to move us forward. Another critical strength needed is the ability to explore innovative and creative worship and service models that appeal to younger worshipers, while remaining faithful to our Lutheran liturgy and doctrine. Improving communication via media is als

All of these are important, so it is difficult to only select 5. I tried to choose those that pertain to the Office of Bishop as many others can be done through Synod Council, Synod Staff, and lay people. Certainly the Bishop should support the others and be involved to a certain extent as he or she cannot do it all but together with staff, Synod Council, and lay leaders who have these gifts can accomplish God's Work through our hands.

All of the above are important in the life of the synod under the Bishop's direction and support. The committee system needs a reboot to support the life of the synod. Some of the above are committee oriented --Worship; Children, Youth and Family Ministry; Evangelism and Mission; Global Mission; Ministry in Daily Life; Ministry with Seniors; Multicultural Ministry; and Social ministry and Public Policy Advocacy.

Add a 6th strenght to number 5 above -- Ministry in daily life

A Bishop who is full of God's Grace.

A bishop that recognizes a congregation in trouble and in need of guidance and leadership. And willing to solve the problem.

A bishop needs to be a pastor to pastors; a sound administrator using the gifts of those around him to further the mission and goals of the church; set good example in furthering the work of the church in the community both within VA and outside of this state, especially now; figure out how through strategic planning we will grow as a church and meet the needs of those without a voice.

Our culture is so divided these days. I would like the next bishop to have firm skills in being a bridge builder between diverse, sometimes adversarial groups (i.e. race and policing, left and right politically, high church and low church, those with a conservative theology and a progressive theology). 2. The synod ministerium and staff sometimes comes across as echoes of one political party over another rather than being "issue oriented" as claimed. This can unintentionally marginalize those we want to try to reach and incorporate into synod efforts of
ministry and outreach. 3. The synod also can appear cliquish (assuming new comers should understand and accept established practices;

- "Preaching/worship leadership" and "Worship/preaching" are the same, it seems to me. I think that invalidates votes for those two topics although simply combining votes for each might be an option for validation.

- "...It is the office of the bishop to preach the Gospel, forgive sins, judge doctrine, and condemn doctrine that is contrary to the Gospel, and exclude from the Christian community the ungodly whose wicked conduct is manifest." Augsburg Confession, Article XXVIII

- I dont know if this issue is addressed in either of these categories..............but many children of lutherans 10-20 years ago, which are know in there twenties and thirties are becoming "nuns", not lutheran not anything, this is very apparent in southwest Virginia and I suspect it has to do with the digital revolution, the immediate gratification complex and geographical distances between parents and there children. It is disturbing to lutheran parents that cannot connect with there children on a religious/spiritual basis. I think there needs to be a category for these folks and there parents struggling with this, that identifies and administers to this ever growing group. I think an o

Note: Responses that mentioned specific names have been altered or removed. This is in accordance with S9.04 of the Virginia Synod Constitution, the bishop shall be elected by the Synod Assembly by ecclesiastical ballot.
Feelings about...

- **the future of the ELCA.**
  - Very pessimistic: 8%
  - Pessimistic: 13%
  - Neutral: 51%
  - Optimistic: 26%

- **the Virginia synod.**
  - Very pessimistic: 7%
  - Pessimistic: 12%
  - Neutral: 53%
  - Optimistic: 28%

- **your congregation.**
  - Very pessimistic: 14%
  - Pessimistic: 13%
  - Neutral: 41%
  - Optimistic: 29%

The Strongest Ministries in Virginia Synod and Which Ministries Should Be Emphasized.

- **Youth Ministry**: 74.6% reported, 68.7% emphasis.
- **Our Mission Partners**: 52.2% reported, 44.8% emphasis.
- **Power I the Spirit**: 44.8% reported, 44.8% emphasis.
- **Women of the ELCA**: 22.0% reported, 13.4% emphasis.
- **Acts**: 21.8% reported, 14.9% emphasis.
- **Healthy Leadership and Wellness**: 34.1% reported, 13.8% emphasis.
- **VA Feeds Kids**: 23.3% reported, 12.9% emphasis.
- **Campus Ministry**: 21.6% reported, 12.9% emphasis.
- **Papua New Guinea Partnership**: 6.5% reported, 8.6% emphasis.
- **Root and Wings**: 8.0% reported, 5.4% emphasis.
- **Lutheran Men in Mission**: 6.7% reported, 3.7% emphasis.
- **Tapestry**: 7.5% reported, 1.7% emphasis.

How well...

- do you feel you understand the activities of the Virginia Synod? 3.73
- does your congregation reach out to people in your community? 3.73
- do you feel you understand the functions of the Virginia Synod? 3.76

Strengths and gifts most important for the new bishop are: working congregations during transitions and crisis, administration, and pastoral care of pastors.

- Working with congregations during crisis and transition: 49.6%
- Administration: 49.6%
- Pastoral care of pastors: 46.8%
- Development of leaders: 40.5%
- Children, youth and family ministry: 31.7%
- Evangelism and mission: 30.4%
- Building community: 29.7%
- Innovation and creativity: 22.8%
- Strategic planning: 20.3%
- Theological interpretation and teaching: 18.8%
- Preaching/worship leadership: 17.9%
- Ministry in daily life: 16.4%
- Ecumenical relations: 16.2%
- Conflict management: 15.5%
- Christian education: 14.6%
- Social ministry and Public policy advocacy: 14.2%
- Multicultural ministry: 10.8%
- Worship/preaching: 9.9%
- Financial management: 9.9%
- Stewardship: 7.6%
- Media and communication: 7.3%
- Ministry with seniors: 6.9%
- Global mission: 4.7%
- Other (please specify): 3.2%

Gender of Respondents

- Male: 45%
- Female: 53%
- Prefer not to specify: 2%
- Not listed above: 0%

Are you a:  % Reported

- lay person: 63.2%
- rostered person: 33.4%

Age of Respondents


N=536
Years Attending ELCA Congregation

% Reported

- less than 1 year: 2.5%
- 1 to 5 years: 10.4%
- 6 to 10 years: 9.7%
- 11 to 15 years: 9.7%
- 16 to 20 years: 10.6%
- 21 to 25 years: 7.4%
- more than 25 years: 49.8%

Community Context of Respondents

- medium city (between 50,000 and 250,000): 33.1%
- small city (between 10,000 and 49,999): 27.9%
- rural: 20.8%
- small town (less than 10,000): 18.2%

**Congregational and Personal Interactions with the Bishop in the Last Six Years**

- **Came to my congregation (visited or preached)**: 73.3% reported, 43.8% not at all.
- **Synod Assembly**: 56.7% reported, 58% not at all.
- **Youth Events**: 43.1% reported, 21.8% not at all.
- **Attended a congregational meeting**: 38.6% reported, 42.9% not at all.
- **Power in the Spirit**: 32.3% reported, 29.1% not at all.
- **Direct contact (one on one)**: 28.7% reported, 51.9% not at all.
- **Funeral (preached or attended)**: 18.7% reported, 24.8% not at all.
- **Not at all**: 1.3% reported, 4.3% not at all.