

Feedback received by Synod  
Bishop Election Committee  
Fall Conference Gatherings, 2016

**1) WHAT ARE WE ABLE TO DO BETTER AS A SYOND AND AS CONGREGATIONS WORKING TOGETHER FOR THE SAKE OF CHRIST'S MISSION THAN AS INDIVIDUAL CONGREGATIONS?**

Educational opportunities such as ACTS and PITS/Opportunities for Lay and Rostered Ecumenical connection  
Youth events  
Ordering/implementing the candidacy process  
Addressing extraordinary circumstances (death of pastor)  
Advocacy and accountability  
Youth ministry, catechism classes, confirmation camps, etc.  
Provide a wider prospective of the Synod and the ELCA  
Be a catalyst for collaborative work/Pooled resources  
Making a difference in the world (World Hunger, Disaster Relief, Malaria Campaign, Global Ministry)  
Support of agencies and institutions/Minnick Center/LFS/Camps  
Clergy gatherings  
Shared ministries  
Support for clergy/Health and Wellness/Financial planning  
Better able to advocate for policy change  
Parish nurses  
Word and Sacrament  
Campus ministry  
Wider diversity of skills/resources  
Connections with sister synods and mission partners  
Synod Assembly  
Mission work (church planting)

**2) CONSIDERING THE DEFINITION AND REPSONSIBILITIES OF A SYOND AND THIS SYOND'S PROFILE, WHAT HAS THE SYOND DONE WELL AND WHAT HAS IT DONE NOT SO WELL IN THE LAST 4 YEARS?**

Areas for growth:

- Call process can be difficult for congregations
- Outreach to minority population is not what it should be
- Better communication (not just electronic)
- Mission strategy—vision for new congregations, renewing congregations
- Campus ministry
- Liberal wider church vs conservative local members
- Help with discernment process for possible ADULT candidates to ministry
- Disconnection felt by small and rural congregations/Bridging gap between small and large congregations

Some miss the United Lutheran Appeal  
Synod staff is understaffed  
Financial support of synod by congregation needs improvement  
Clergy compensation particularly in small churches  
Diversity in leadership  
Marketing to the public (who we are/what we do)  
Use of and care for retired pastors  
Spiritual accountability for clergy  
Need directory of churches by conferences  
Conflict within individual congregations  
Small churches have trouble funding for synod events  
Continuing Ed for clergy  
No financial support for senior candidates  
Lack of long term planning/Let's think outside the box  
Better visibility of Synod representatives in rural areas  
Wider representation of lay people at Assembly

Well done:

Adult Christian formation  
Youth programming  
Connection between agencies and congregations  
Hunger task force  
Social causes (Malaria/World Hunger)  
Raising candidates from youth  
Communication /access to information is vastly improved  
Power in the Spirit, ACTS, Ministerium. Synod Assembly, First Call, Healthy Congregations  
Structure of synod is good  
Support of the ministerium  
Synod Assembly  
Strong conviction/Confidence in tradition and theology  
The Bishop as our Pastors' Pastor  
Delivering the message of grace  
Expanded use of our Deans

Mixed bag:

Care of ministerium  
Handling the fallout/healing of the 2009 vote

**3) WHAT SHOULD BE THE PRIMARY PRIORITIES FOR SYNOD MINISTRY IN THE NEXT 4 YEARS?**

Recruit candidates for ministry/attention to the call process/financial support  
Develop an evangelism strategy (minorities, former/inactive members, unchurched)  
Emphasis on community outreach/provide training on the "how to" of this  
Mission strategy—new congregations, reestablishing congregations; use of ELCA tools, strengthening of congregational outreach

Continued emphasis on Lutheran theology/GRACE  
Keep what works!  
Communication other than electronics that will inform and invite  
Building trust in the Synod—staffing that can focus on congregations; ease the feeling of “disconnect”  
Get together more with better use of time when we ARE together  
Rearrangement/realignment of conferences  
Youth education  
Grow in campus and young adult ministry  
Be a part of our communities (may mean multicultural ministries!)  
Spiritual growth of pastors  
Make church relevant for the next generation  
Strengthen the financial roots of the synod  
Team networks on social media (coaches, interaction, etc.)  
Interconnection of congregations across the synod  
Help to incorporate small congregations in planning/activities  
New strategies for small/rural parishes  
Care of our pastors  
Alternative music (decline of available organists and church musicians!)  
Reimagine Synod Assembly

**4) WHAT SHOULD CONGREGATIONS EXPECT OF THE SYNOD AND BISHOP IN THE NEXT 4 YEARS?**

Visit every clergy conference  
Be present at conference happenings to get to know lay people  
Work out the role of the deans in the synod  
Be clear about role of Synod Council  
Be visible in congregations—especially during vacancies and/or celebrations  
Be engaged in a relational role with youth and young adults  
Organize and delegate administrative duties to balance professional and personal life  
Continue to be strong in call/candidacy  
Handle conflict  
Assess what is going on in the synod  
Communicate observations and discoveries from across the synod  
Cast a vision/direction in cooperation with Synod Council  
Constantly assess “why are we doing this?”  
Be bold in witness  
Newsletter on website/post sermons  
Set boundaries and priorities  
Be rooted in Scripture  
Strong connection with ELCA/Bishops from other synods  
Be involved ecumenically  
Attention to supply ministers for congregations

Value the diverse congregation (location/size)  
Should synod office be moved?

**5) WHAT SHOULD THE BISHOP EXPECT OF CONGREGATIONS IN THE NEXT FOUR YEARS?**

MORE!

Invitations/welcome into the life of congregations  
Participation in synod-wide ministries/events/committees  
Prayer for the office of Bishop  
Full benevolent support (acceptance of financial responsibility to the greater church)  
Patience in the transition to new leadership  
Acceptance that he/she does not have the same skills/strengths of previous bishop  
Be open to new initiatives  
Respect for the authority of the office  
Fulfillment of congregational/conference constitutional requirements  
Flexibility  
Vision and grounding in the Gospel  
Be willing to hold synod offices and responsibilities

**6) WHAT ARE THE SPIRITUAL GIFTS AND LEADERSHIP ATTRIBUTES THAT ARE MOST IMPORTANT FOR A BISHOP IN THIS SYNOD IN THE NEXT 4 YEARS?**

Administration...a happy and effective staff  
Positive visioning  
Caring pastoral presence  
Model of a healthy spiritual life/active prayer life  
Solid theologian/Dedicated student of scripture, theology, and the church  
Strong preacher  
Stamina/Courage  
Effective judicator  
Enthusiasm for the life of the Synod  
Care of pastors  
Care of self (physically and spiritually)  
Leadership  
Ability to delegate—willingness to ask for and receive help  
Good communicator—personally and technologically  
Patience/Sense of humor  
Knows how to be pragmatic  
Creative problem solver  
Participation in Churchwide/ecumenical opportunities  
Be approachable  
Must be able to sing “Pharaoh, Pharaoh”  
Adaptable (there are great differences in congregations across the synod)  
Good listener