

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 SYNOD AND THIS SYNOD'S PROFILE, WHAT HAS THE SYNOD 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