

# Summary of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Bishop Questionnaire

Research and Evaluation  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
December 2017

Between November and December 2017, the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America fielded a questionnaire to members of a synod-wide email distribution list. Respondents could complete the questionnaire online, or submit responses via paper copy. The response period was between November 7th and December 8th, 2017. A total of 270 responses were received.

## Questionnaire

The questionnaire asked respondents about the best joy in their congregation or ministry and the synod, as well as the skills and gifts the bishop will need and what success in the synod looks like. Comments were grouped according to theme. The actual comments are available in Appendix 1. Regarding the best joy in respondents' congregations, about one-third of the comments were about the outreach efforts by congregations, 16 percent mentioned worship and 12 percent said something about the music in the congregation.

Regarding the synod, 27 percent of comments were about synod-wide events or programs, like the Assembly or Youth Gathering; 14 percent mentioned either how inclusive the synod is, or they did not know what was best. Some respondents (13 percent) praised the synod staff.

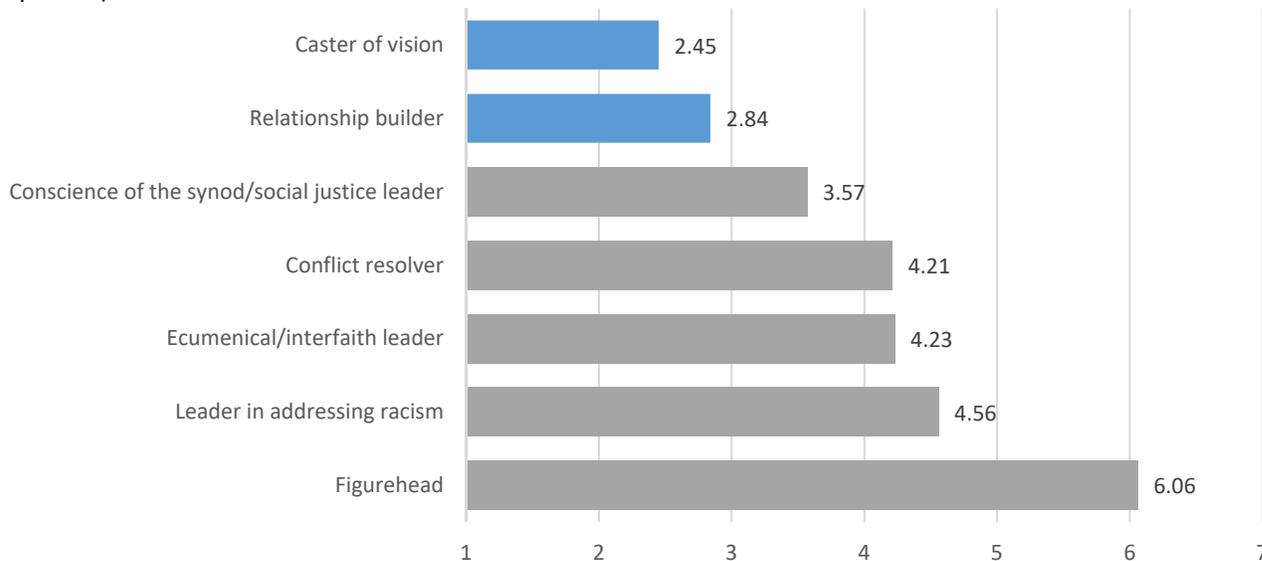
According to 35 percent of respondents, the next bishop will need to have "wisdom, vision, knowledge, and/or patience". This was followed by the new bishop being a pastor to pastors (14 percent) and ten percent wanted the new bishop to be a consensus builder.

In addition to the open-ended questions, respondents were asked to prioritize the role of the incoming bishop, by ranking each of the seven responsibilities, assigning "1" to the responsibility considered most important and "7" to the least important. An average score was given to each responsibility, again with "1" being the most important.

The average score for "Caster of vision" was 2.45, followed by "Relationship builder" with an average score 2.84. The remaining items had scores above 3.5 suggesting they are less important to respondents (see Figure 1). More specifically, when looking at responses by rostered minister status (those whom are rostered compared to those whom are not), we see some differences: rostered leaders are more likely to rate "caster of vision" as "very important" (a score 1 or 2), relative to non-rostered respondents. Interestingly, non-rostered respondents on average rated being an "ecumenical or interfaith leader" around 3.9 (about in the middle) while rostered leaders' average rating was 4.8, nearly a point higher. Finally, we see rostered leaders' giving an average score of 4.4 when asked how important it would be for the bishop to be a "leader in addressing racism" compared to non-rostered respondents' average score of 4.7.

**Figure 1: The new bishop should focus on casting a vision and building relationships.**

(1 = very important)



Regarding the three areas where the synod should focus its efforts to strengthen the “love of neighbor”, 54 percent of respondents indicated efforts should be made toward anti-racism, followed by issues around hunger and homelessness (52 percent) and economic justice (50 percent).

Lastly, when asked what “success” would look like in the synod three years from now, 42 percent mentioned growing, thriving, yoked, or fewer at-risk congregations; 16 percent said (more) diverse / social justice-minded congregations; and 11 percent said cohesive Christian communities working together. When asked about how God was at work in the synod, 19 percent of comments were about the synod’s ministries and/or the people of the congregations, 16 percent of comments were about the outreach efforts of the synod and its congregations, and 14 percent of comments indicated they saw God at work ‘everywhere’ they looked.

## Respondents

Approximately one in two respondents were between 41 and 65 years of age, while 40 percent of respondents were 65 years of age or older. Females made up 57 percent of respondents. More than 80 percent of respondents identified as “white”. More than one-third of respondents (36%) identified as a rostered leader, while 26 percent of respondents were lay members. The remaining percentage were congregational council members (29%) or identified as “other” (9%).

## Conclusion

In summary, the next bishop of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod should focus on being a “caster of vision” and relationship builder. Additionally, the new bishop should have wisdom, vision, knowledge, and/or patience, be a pastor to pastors and be a consensus builder. For the synod to show “love of neighbor”, it should make efforts toward “anti-racism”, focus on issues around hunger and homelessness, and economic justice. Success in the synod in three years’ time would manifest as congregations growing in average worship attendance, becoming more diverse and working for social justice. Finally, being a cohesive Christian community is important as well.

# Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Bishop Election Questionnaire

Fall 2017

Data as of 8 Dec 2017; N=208; percentages are reported unless noted

**1. What is the best joy or ministry in your congregation? (See Appendix 1 for list of comments.)**

- 31 percent of comments were about outreach
- 16 percent of comments were about worship
- 12 percent of comments were about music

**2. What is the best joy or ministry in the synod? (See Appendix 1 for list of comments.)**

- 27 percent of comments were about synod wide events or programs
- 14 percent were “I don’t know”
- 14 percent were about how inclusive nature of the synod
- 13 percent were in praise of synod staff

**3. What skills/gifts will be needed in our next bishop? (See Appendix 1 for list of comments.)**

- 35 percent of comments were about the next bishop having “wisdom, vision, knowledge, and/or patience”
- 14 percent of comments were about the bishop being “a pastor to pastors”
- Ten percent of comments were about the next bishop being “a consensus builder”

**4. Prioritize the role of the synod bishop: Rank the following from 1 (most important) to 7 (least important):**

% reported	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Mean
Caster of vision	47	18	10	7	6	9	3	2.45
Relationship builder	25	29	15	11	8	9	3	2.84
Conscience of the synod/social justice leader	11	18	20	22	13	13	3	3.57
Conflict resolver	4	12	20	18	20	10	7	4.21
Ecumenical/interfaith leader	6	12	14	18	24	21	4	4.23
Leader in addressing racism	5	8	16	16	23	21	12	4.56
Figurehead	3	3	6	7	6	7	68	6.06

**5. As a follow up to the last synod assembly, identify the top three issues that could strengthen our synod’s love of neighbor (mark up to three):**

% reported	Issue
55	anti-racism
52	hunger/homelessness
50	economic justice
45	cultural diversity
23	gender equality
22	immigration
17	criminal justice
12	Other (please specify)

**6. What would success in our synod look like in 3 years? (See Appendix 1 for list of comments.)**

- 42 percent mentioned growing, thriving, yoked, fewer at risk congregations
- 16 percent said diverse / social justice minded congregations
- 11 percent said cohesive Christian communities working together

**7. Where do you see God at work in our synod? (See Appendix 1 for list of comments.)**

- 19 percent of comments were about the synod's ministries and/or the people of the congregations
- 16 percent of comments were about the outreach efforts of the synod and its congregations
- 14 percent of comments indicated they saw God at work 'everywhere' they looked

**Are you a: (% reported)**

- 29 Congregation council member or committee chair
- 27 Rostered leader currently serving in a congregation
- 26 Other lay member
- 9 Rostered leader not currently serving in a congregation
- 9 Other (please specify below)

**Your age: (% reported)**

- 3 25 or younger
- 11 26 to 40
- 47 41 to 64
- 40 65 or older

**Are You: (% reported)**

- 57 Female
- 39 Male
- 4 Prefer not to answer
- 0 Not listed

**Are you: (% reported) (choose all that apply)**

- 83 White / Caucasian
- 5 African American / Black
- 5 Other (please specify below)
- 1 Asian/ Pacific Islander
- 1 Latino / Hispanic
- 1 Multi-racial
- 1 African National / African Caribbean
- 0 American Indian / Alaska Native
- 0 Arab / Middle Eastern

## Appendix 1

(Comments were edited for clarity)

### 1. What is the best joy or ministry in your congregation? See attached.

- Youth ministry
- Youth Group (6th - 12th grade). Those non-regular but amazing item/fundraising moments.
- Youth & children participation Outreach ministry growth
- Youth
- Would have to speak in the past tense, for those ministries that brought the best joy are now defunct, or about to cease.
- Worship. We are comforted, challenged, and prepared to engage with the world together as Christians.
- Worship, preparation of meals for homeless center
- Worship together feels sacred to me. There is joy when we worship and sing and share a meal together. There is also uncertainty for the future because of small numbers attending worship, and because people are aging, and some dying (5 funerals in the last 5 months). This ministry is also sacred - tending to the needs of mourners, family and friends, to assure them that God provides, and that we will find a way forward.
- Worship Service, Instrumental Music program, and Providing space for local Community Groups
- worship Ministry to the homeless and addicts- Las Vias Ministry to children and youth-Children Fun Night
- Worship is a weekly highlight with meaningful connections of scripture to daily life, the small group opportunities provide a variety of ways for individuals to connect to God, each other and the community.
- Worship is a great joy: regular, midweek, seasonal, lay preachers, youth led, Holy humor, Labyrinth walks, Rejoicing Spirits, Quiet Nights, choirs, bells, bands, kids, all of it! Rejoicing Spirits, Appalachian Service Project, young adult ministry, youth and Silver Springs connections, adult ed forums... we have lots of great things going on. Currently in visioning program for a capital campaign.
- Worship and preaching. Bible study. And serving in the community.
- Worship and community outreach
- Worship
- worship
- Working with the intellectually disabled.
- Within my congregation, participating in the music ensembles and providing goods for the local community food pantry are the best joys and ministries.
- Wednesday night community meal
- We're seeing new, refreshing worship, growth, and joy at our church, due in large part to our newly called pastor! People are stepping up and helping!!!
- We were delighted when our lazy pastor left but it was a short-lived joy as the next pastor was insulting and quit after four Sundays. Now we have an interim who is a seasoned pastor but holds no interim training. He is a bully. We're appealing to Synod's leadership, but no one seems to know how we got here. Life in SEPenn Synod.
- We stayed together through a nearly four-year transition. Yesterday, we voted to call a new pastor. Thanks Be to God!!!
- We have so many it's hard to designate one thing. In terms of the synod and the Bishop, I would offer that our mission to include all and the variety of ministries we are able to offer given the large congregation.
- We have many active ministries. Our worship brings focus to all these ministries. Most notable are our service ministries. In the past few years we built a medical office for Kenyans out of a shipping container and we are exploring another project of this magnitude.
- We have great worship and are deeply engaged in service to the local community through our food pantry, and to the world, supporting disaster response, sponsoring children in Guatemala, and supporting an international

mission trip each year. We also have a strong youth ministry, and started a special focus on middle school girls this year.

- We have a rejoicing spirits worship service once a month and it is a wonderful ministry and a service full of the Spirit.
- We have a large Sunday School and active youth.
- We are a healthy congregation who is genuinely striving to follow Christ.
- Warm welcoming people.
- Vacation Bible School - we collaborate with several other denominations in the community to have enough volunteers. We advertise to the community to bring in new children for the fun. I have been the organizer for the past 8 years or so, and there is nothing like being up in front and leading the song and dance time and having those little faces looking back at you and totally getting it.
- uplifting worship
- Turning a conflict filled congregation into a loving, vibrant congregation
- To me, the best joy is the youth program. The youth of the congregation are vibrant and have such beautiful hearts. They make the church come alive
- There are many joys in our ministry. Some of the greatest relate to mission trips, the sense of vibrant community in our congregation, our worship life and support groups.
- Their generosity to hunger related ministries
- The Youth!
- The work of the people of St. John's in the community and in their vocations.
- The way we take care of each other and the willingness to help anyone in need.
- The vitality and Spirit that pervades the congregation and her ministries.
- The relationships that I've been able to build.
- the people, the high level of sacred music, the receptiveness of the congregation and their willingness to respond to challenges.
- The people of my congregation are committed Lutherans and are a joy to do ministry with.
- The outreach we provide to our communities.
- The outreach that we do. We give in many ways and it involves all ages. This is something that is very uplifting in our Church as we reach out to the Community and I would still like it to grow.
- the outreach and connection with those in need
- The music programs
- The members themselves.
- The joy of young families, children, our pastor, and a "communion table open to all. The willingness of our members to help those in need.
- The greatest joy I experience in my congregation is seeing the participation of children and youth. This runs neck and neck with presiding at public worship.
- The GOOD NEWS of grace in Jesus Christ! Experiencing by the joy of God's presence in many ways from worship to outreach. experiencing the challenge of the Holy Spirit in response to the hurts of the world. Experiencing the growing competence of the body of Christ because of intentional discipleship practices and encouragement.
- The forward-looking and capable leadership of the congregation.
- The fellowship of its members. The willingness of the members to help with each activity going on at the church.
- the faithfulness of our senior citizen volunteers. We are missing two generations in our congregation: baby boomers & Gen x'ers. Because they aren't there, our seniors continue to keep the ministries going. It's a sad occurrence, but without them we would be in trouble!
- The Christmas Angels.

- The Christian friendships we develop with one another.
- The building of relationships within the membership. Giving of many types of gifts to others: food support, gifts for Silver Springs, quilts for LDR, etc.
- The best joy is our outreach ministry to the community. We have outdoor services, and we sponsor The King's Table to feed the community.
- The best joy is experiencing hope of someone who had felt hopeless. This comes from the amazing good news that we offer.
- The best is the out-reach projects for the community and world. Supplies for the poor, homeless, new arrivals in the US, are some of the many services that the church and members contribute time, service, etc. Also, the present members are accepting to new members regardless of their religion, social status, race. etc.
- The ability for my church family and I to serve others in our local community.
- The "on going reformation" spirit.
- Teaching Twos and their parents on Sunday mornings.
- Supporting each other as we seek to learn what God has planned for each of us both within & outside our congregation. We are a church of many talents that seem to be willingly put to good use. We are a very caring church family & we celebrate our relationships with each other and our Lord enthusiastically.
- Sunday Morning Worship
- Sunday morning worship
- Stephen Ministry
- Social ministry organizations connections
- Small groups.
- small groups; story sharing
- Small Group Ministry
- Sharing life events of members and friends of the congregation, both happy and sad, is a privilege and a joy for me as pastor. The music ministry has also afforded us the opportunity to welcome and embrace a more diverse membership.
- Serving together through outreach to help individuals and families in the community. Worshiping together.
- Serving the poor, preaching, teaching God's Word, worship
- Serving Others; being creative, honest, joyful, and welcoming in worship
- Servicing members of our local community that are in need
- Service to people in our congregation, in the community, in the synod and internationally.
- Service Activities...such as the ELCA Day of Service and regular service projects throughout the year
- Seeing persons grow in their leadership capacity. The willingness of persons to accept positions of responsibility AND to facilitate their responsibilities for the good of the ministry.
- Seeing people share their faith and getting energized doing so. Seeing people get an idea and then running with it. The enthusiasm is contagious. Currently, it is seeing new people step up and plan fellowship events when there traditionally hasn't been many. Many of the organizers are newer to the congregation. And seeing people understand and rally around the need for a purpose and mission / vision for the congregation.
- Seeing people come together, motivated by grace, to participate in acts of service/social ministry.
- Seeing children participate in music and youth activities.
- See the new life in Christ that is springing up in the congregation
- Scouting program is outstanding. Clear majority of scouts coming from other churches and the larger community. Our community clothing rack is also pretty good.
- Reaching out to the neighborhood through preschool, Boy Scouts, special events which we invite the neighbors to come.

- Presently, it's our INreach team (taking care of Grace members). This small group of dynamic people continually amaze me with their desire to help others and their new ideas on how to improve the lives of our Grace, as well as our community at large.
- Personally, I love the community/church family thing, but that's not really a ministry. Sunday School and our music program, which invites all members of the congregation to participate at whatever level they are comfortable--those are both great ministries.
- Outreach to the community - food banks, code blue sheltering, disaster preparedness and response
- outreach to local and worldwide community
- Outreach into the community. We have a variety of ways of reaching out... serving in food pantries, creating bags of toiletries and necessities that are distributed by the police and social service organizations, building wheelchair ramps in the community, holding events for neighbors to discuss faith and other important topics in life, etc.
- Outreach in many different areas, into the city, Africa, the local high school, via the ELCA worldwide, support of seminarians
- Outreach and service to the surrounding community and those in need.
- Our young families
- Our work in Ministry: faith formation, service, evangelism/fellowship, and worship
- our women's group
- Our weekly gathering around Word and Sacrament
- Our vitality and engagement of all who worship with us!
- Our social ministry outreach program is by far my greatest joy! -Large food program for the food insecure - Cooking program with seniors for a homeless that feeds 70 children and 30 adults every month -100-150 Sandwiches for another congregation to distribute on the streets every month -300-350 Sandwiches for a food kitchen in Kensington every month. -Support local food pantry every month with dry good -Help local families with frozen food, fresh food and dry goods -Thanksgiving meal fixings to local families -Clothing to the local food & clothing bank -Financially support Martin Luther/Silver Springs Campership -110 Christmas gifts to 10 local families -Backpacks filled with school supplies for local children .....and much more
- Our social ministry efforts which are non-stop. It keeps us looking beyond ourselves.
- Our Social Ministry and Music. We have tremendous outreach in the community and beyond. We participate jointly with a local Mennonite church and have many social ministry programs. Our Music Director involves all members of the congregation in all types of music.
- Our pastor
- our pastor
- Our music ministry
- Our most beloved ministry is our block parties, which provide the congregation with the opportunity to partner with and support businesses in the community and to raise funds for a charitable cause. The block parties also give the congregation the opportunity to host, serve, and interact with people in the community who are not members of our congregation.
- Our joy comes from our feeding ministry. It is a difficult journey to serve those in need and it hasn't some without cost, but is a truly praiseworthy cause.
- Our food bank and youth ministry.
- Our exciting worship, traditionally Lutheran in that we follow Luther's suggestion to preserve the best music and worship of the past with new and creative ways to involve the congregation in worship focusing on word and sacrament. Especially exciting is our refugee resettlement ministry that has brought many Africans and African Americans into our worship.

- Our congregation finds joy in serving others both outside and inside of the congregation. They have a passion for Bible study and Christian education. Worship is very important to this congregation as well as is engaging our youth in service to others.
- Our confirmation ministry hands down for me and my family is the best joy! Also, the willingness of fellow disciples to give of their time, talents and treasures...what a beautiful witness to God's love!
- Our bell choir
- Organizing a new congregation before retirement
- Not sure what you mean by best joy? If you are asking what I value about my congregation, it is that they try to be unconditionally accepting.
- New members and youth participation.
- New life band plays 3rd Sunday of every month. What a blessing. Outreach committee block parties x2 and smaller events for community
- My biggest joy is our senior citizen's outreach ministry to the nursing home next to the church. Both myself and the parishioners who attend really feel good about the work we are doing
- Music, community garden, feeding the homeless and stop hunger now programs.
- music our young pastors is well versed in the bible but doesn't know how to relate the bible to our everyday challenging life (family, government, world challenges)
- Music ministry and adult discussion group
- Music Ministry - we involve as many people of all ages as possible. Instrumental and vocal.
- Music and youth
- Music and worship, fellowship, and outreach
- Music and hymnody on Sunday mornings; generosity of the members; social activism of many.
- Music
- Music
- music
- Ministry to the homeless ministry to children and youth Worship
- message and the joy of singing
- Just as Google's motto is " don't be evil", the ELCA moto should be "don't be hypocritical". Search YouTube for 'illegal dissemination intimate tori' to see what the issues are of some branches of Christianity.
- joint ventures with other congregations in the community to serve
- Intergenerational outreach events
- Inspiring worship
- Inclusiveness for LGBTQ community by supporting PFLAG. We have a long way to go for diversity, but this is a step.
- I would say our Shepherd Shelf food pantry and our youth group.
- I tried to take thi98s silly survey and I was stuck on "figurehead. This survey DID NOT WORK!!!
- I think two things, our welcoming and warm worship services, and our shared blessings community meal which helps feed about 100 people a week in need here in the city
- I think our most joyful ministry is our contemporary Christian band that plays once per month. That may be our best ministry, followed closely by our outreach ministry which does a great deal of fundraising for local organizations and charities.
- I appreciate having the opportunity to work and worship in a thoughtful, reverent, meaningful church environment. I love joining with others in the congregation in religious study, particularly in ways the church examines current events, religious books, history, ethics, ELCA statements, and social service. I love thinking about the issues in good sermons, meeting and talking with fellow participants, singing "good" music (I regret

that, so many harmonies have been removed from hymnals even though organists HAVE the music in front of them), and well-run and inclusive communion.

- I am the chairperson for our fellowship committee and am a part of our evangelism committee. For this reason, I am partial to these ministries. Their existence our church is vital to keep us moving forward and growing as a congregation. However out of all the ministries at our church worship and music by far brings me, as a member, the most joy. Our worship services each week whether it's a standard Sunday service, service with our faith a live band, or a special holiday season, they are all beautiful, meaningful, and educational. Every worship service I feel that I have Strengthened my relationship with God.
- I am not currently attending an ELCA Congregation, although I still wish to be involved in the greater church.
- I am biased in this response. Appalachia Service Project. It is a transformative cross-generational ministry.
- Helping under privileged people in our community. Our stewards seem to rally around this mission through time, talent and treasure.
- Head Start, meeting here rent-free.
- Having meals together, fellowship
- Growth with diversity of age and race
- Growing a dynamic expanding community with a passion for the gospel and love of the neighbor. We continue to see that young families and children are finding our congregation to be a place where they are welcome - which has its own joys and challenges.
- Grace to be who the best you, inclusiveness, sermons sincerity if congregation
- Gospel & Jazz Sunday
- Given where we are (on a corner of a main street) in Philadelphia, we have so many opportunities to interact with our neighbors, catch up with those around us and those just passing by. We also have a beautiful and historic building--which can present issues of age and wear-and-tear, but which also allows us to have great conversations with folks who pop in just to look around. All in all, our true joy right now is welcoming folks and sharing all the amazing things we do with one another in Jesus' name.
- Gathering for worship, prayer, praise & thanksgiving around the life-giving gospel & gracious sacraments of the Lord Jesus Christ
- For me, the best ministry is fellowship. Our stewards are the most generous and caring group of people. I love interacting with them!
- Fellowship with other members
- Feeding the hungry and our worship service including the music
- Even though my church does not always like the change some of the youth made, I think that when the youth does do things in the church its the best to me. I like being able to have a part in the service.
- Eucharistic Outreach Ministry
- Enhanced ministries with young adults. Meeting people where they are not necessarily within the traditional church building
- Each fall we do a Meal Packaging Event for 'God's Work, Our Hands' Sunday with two other local congregations. This is now the third year in a row, and we've packaged 60,000 meals to help feed hungry people in west Philadelphia. It's incredible to work together, and to gather together such diverse people all united in our common faith in Christ!
- Doing intentional interim ministry to help a congregation discern for itself the will of God in Jesus Christ.
- Currently we have a praise band that has given new life to the congregation through this ministry that congregation has come together with a new spiritual excitement.
- Contemporary worship, communion every Sunday, community garden, lots of bible study and Christian education groups to join.
- Community Service and Member Friendliness and Acceptance

- Community Outreach
- Community Outreach
- Community outreach
- Community Clothing Rack. The Community Clothing Rack is open every Wednesday morning or afternoon and one Thursday Evening a month. Members of the greater community are welcome to browse and take home a bag of clothes free of charge. This ministry is widely used throughout the community and is well known by area social ministries.
- Community Action
- Coming together as the people of God around the Word and the Sacraments in worship
- Christian Education with all, including Adults, Youth, Music, Bible Study, and so forth.
- Choir, good worship service
- Children's Ministry
- Caring for others
- Bible study, where a group of women gather and learn while supporting each other.
- aid for friends' program fun events
- A spirit of joy and acceptance and a commitment to a ministry of service.
- 1. Our service to the community through our Day Care Center, Homeless Ministry and Global Mission Partnership. 2. Heartfelt bonds of love and fellowship shown through consistent words and acts of caring. 3. Faithful and dedicated service of our pastor. 4. Commitment to urban ministry and helping those on the margins. 5. Commitment to cultivating the next generation of leaders for the church through internship training.
- [This is a difficult question for me since I now am on-leave following 30 years of ministry, doing occasional interim assignments, and do not serve any congregation.] For me the joy of congregational ministry overall is encountering and engaging people in the strengths and vulnerabilities of their humanity (hopes, fears, gifts, loves, losses) with the irrepressibly steadfast love of God. This is made available one-on-one and offered in community. As an unapologetically "eucharistic" people gathered in Christ, we extend our grateful lives in generous service.
- Contemporary worship, Youth ministry, outreach to the community

## **2. What is the best joy or ministry in the synod? See attached.**

- Youth Program
- Youth Ministry
- youth ministry
- Youth events and gatherings.
- Youth events
- When congregations connect, sharing wisdom and resources, multiplying the presence of God together, living the challenge and delight of diversity, having the opportunity to have expertise in a congregation that can be shared with others (recognizing that one congregation is never going to do everything well!)
- When colleagues get together and share joys and griefs and learn together. I don't know if the synod "has a ministry" beyond what churches and clergy do together on their own with the support of the Bishop. I suppose the youth mission trips every summer.
- Welcome Church, prison ministry, youth ministry, web updates
- We have supported the capital campaign, and recently went through a pastoral transition. We are excited about the Welcome Church, youth ministry and are planning to engage the synod anti- racism team soon.
- We have a commitment to multicultural ministry. which beyond being a best joy, is also the most difficult challenge we have.
- Unknown

- Unfortunately, I can't answer that, as I'm not sure of everything that's been happening in SEPA.
- To bring leadership and direction to the churches and agencies of the Synod. To be responsive to the needs, this year especially urging us to provide disaster relief for all affected - hurricanes, fire
- The Youth Ministry program is amazing. I think it's something unique to the synod but also valuable as it brings youth together and builds friendships in Christ. I am glad they are working on trying to build a young adult ministry. I think this is one of the benefits of our synod being small and mighty - we can come together and show our numbers proudly.
- The youth ministry program
- The youth gatherings are the best joys for me at the synodical level.
- The Youth Gathering...what an amazing and inspiring conference (New Orleans, 2009?)!!! If we could just channel some of that energy and creativity into inspiring our youth in our home congregations (relatable music, service projects, peer mentorship, youth leaders), we could be building compassionate, stronger, and larger congregations. Unfortunately, many of our youth come back and instantly get deflated by congregations that are more intent on growing buildings, finances, and traditions than they are on focusing on the needs of our younger generations.
- The youth events, and how involved everyone is in the church.
- The youth and young adult events. Trips to South Dakota!!
- The work of Brad Burke with youth/young adult ministry
- The Welcome Church!
- The Welcome Church
- The way our synod extends to all people and people of color
- The visibility of our current bishop. She helps to spread the good news and empowers others to do the same. The way she uses social media in encouraging so that we all feel connected to her ministry even if we are not present.
- The support received through matters that are not easy to navigate, such as LGBTQ issues.
- The spirit of collegiality.
- The SMOs
- The public ministry that we do, whether it be showing up to protests or doing ecumenical work.
- The preparing and ordaining of new pastors and deacons the support of congregations in their ministry
- The outreach and inclusiveness we are demonstrating in our communities
- The community of believers
- The Bishop and staff communicating the bigger picture of what the Church is all about.
- The best joy of the synod is knowing we are not alone. Understanding that we are A part of a larger church that extends all over the world gives us hope that our work is what God intends.
- The appeal to a younger generation of worshipers and the hope that comes from seeing a generation of younger pastors heeding their call.
- The Anti-Racism Team.
- The ability to keep rostered leaders and congregations focused on mission and outreach; in other words, ministry beyond themselves.
- That there are so many varied types of Ministries to reach many people. The Church is trying to see that not all people are the same in how they follow their Faith and I feel the Synod is opening more options to meet people where they are. The youth and young Adult Ministry is wonderful and the outreach.
- That the Bishop is involved and inclusive all to all congregations in the synod.
- That synod is becoming more inclusive in its approach to minorities. Still more work needs to be done.
- That is difficult to answer. I don't know.
- Synod is invisible in our congregation.

- Synod assembly is always uplifting and brings us closer to each other and our congregations and our synod's outreach not only to our congregations but also beyond.
- Synod Assembly
- Synergy When we overcome our separation and isolation, trusting the work of the Holy Spirit, and discover just how much more able we are when we work together. I realize it may seem more difficult and time consuming, and that may be true early, but the long-term results and connections are so incredibly valuable and effective.
- Support for seminarians.
- Strengthening individual churches for the ability to carry out mission.
- Standing against injustice.
- Service/outreach that combines the efforts of many congregations
- Service
- Seminars for the lay people
- seeing the good works of Lutheran Charities and World Hunger
- Resources
- Representing the synod's churches in the larger community. Just a regular lay person, I don't frequently even think about the synod, but I am most aware when the bishop stands side-by-side with other religious leaders in support/protest of events/values in the larger community (plus, when the congregation needs a new pastor).
- Rejoicing Spirits across congregations. Candidacy. Most important - anti racism task force. The synod council, deans and synod staff should all be required to go through the training.
- Proclaiming God's Word to a diverse population of believers
- Placing candidates in churches where they are called
- Philadelphia is a major city in the US and a fantastic mission field for love and service with our neighbors. Being present in the city, being Christ for our neighbors, living into the reality of urban ministry is so exciting!
- Partnership with NED-ELCT.
- Partnership and connection - the embracing of the truth that we must do God's work together, share ideas and struggles, pray for each other.
- partnering to impact social issues
- Participate in ecumenical services and support the fight for injustice
- Outreach, helping others in need
- Outreach ministry to congregations
- outreach
- Outreach to needy
- Our tight knit little synod is willing to vision, to see the landscape of discipleship is changing and to try to answer the call to serve.
- Our synod's best ministries are corporate worship events, support for our Seminary, and commitment to new mission starts.
- Our synod assembly
- our positive relationship with other faith
- Our outreach to the community
- Our diversity
- our diversity
- Our commitment to interfaith life/development and shared ministry points of light.
- Opportunities for Youth and Young Adults. I appreciate the events organized by the Synod for these people.
- Opportunities for learning, youth gatherings.
- One of the best ministries in the synod is its ministry to youth and young adults, especially gatherings like JYG, Helping Hands Day, and Service trips to the Dakota reservation.

- Occasionally we see glimmers of hope in congregational programs that are untouched by Synod leadership.
- Nothing! The entire synod staff combined has less than 10 years of parish experience among them. The Bishop is always traveling to this or that churchwide-related meeting and is rarely in the office or on the territory of the synod. How can you be a Shepherd if you aren't with the sheep?
- Not sure.
- Not sure.
- Not sure how to respond. Not much aware about Synod activities
- Not sure as I don't know of many...ELCA Good Gifts program looks interesting....
- Not sure
- None. Really do not know why we need a synod and bishop.
- None we have experienced.
- No idea! I don't really feel the presence of the synod. I must ASSUME that what is good about my congregation is an extension of what is good about the synod.
- Not much joy as churches falter, membership ages and money given to grow mission with the bishops' program apparently has not produced reportable benefits.
- Much better Bishop convocations; web page
- Moving forward to share the good news of Jesus to create community in ways that are always good & new with more & more people in our neighborhoods.
- Mission work with our partners in Tanzania.
- Mission Trips and local support of those less fortunate
- Mission
- Ministry to those most in need: Welcome Church, ministry to recently incarcerated, etc.
- Ministries of Artman . liberty Lutheran
- Maybe it's because we are coming off the 500-year reformation anniversary, but it seems that ecumenical work/services are becoming more and more frequent. There's a feeling of better understanding our Christian roots the differences among them and focusing on uniting in Christ.
- Lutheran Charities
- It's ability to bring us together as one church and help us achieve what we couldn't separately. I don't know if it's been living into that model lately.
- Interfaith dialogue
- Intentional interim ministry
- information sharing on MinistryLink
- In my perception the Synod profile is too low with our congregants. I really cannot answer this question despite reading Synod newsletters.
- I'm not very knowledgeable about synod affairs.
- I'm excited by the interfaith work that is happening. Our current bishop is amazing at reaching across boundaries to create and build relationships among people of different faiths.
- I used to attend some of the lay classes at LTSP. THE Assembly is always great. There used to be a one-day retreat for Women at the LTSP.
- I think our youth program is very strong and I particularly feel we have excellent youth leaders who will help to lead us in the future
- I suspect for similar reasons, the National Youth Gathering. I went to San Antonio when I was in 11th grade and it was one of the first times that I think I felt the actual Spirit! A close second is Bear Creek Camp, because while not quite as spectacular, it gave me a yearly dose of "church is not just sitting in a pew and singing boring songs."

- I see none. The synod appears to have become part of the Socialist Party of America and has abandoned the Gospel.
- I have no idea what the synod does, and I've been to many Synod Assemblies. It is just a "4 letter word" in our church. Other than having to send money to the synod, we never, ever see or hear from them.
- I feel like I don't know what ministries the synod does that aren't steeped in finances.
- I enjoy working with candidates for ordination on the candidacy committee
- I don't know
- I don't really know. I think that so many of the adjacent churches work together on programs and ministry.
- I don't know. My only association has been that the Synod, being on Council, is they ask for funding.
- I don't know, which says a lot. There does not seem to be a plan or vision for how the synod can help congregations navigate these very difficult times, even something as obvious as getting congregations to work together
- I don't know how to answer that, and perhaps that is a statement in and of itself
- I don't know
- I do not find any "joy" in the synod now.
- I believe the Harvey Cedars retreat, which the synod has recently become involved with, is a huge blessing to so many.
- I appreciate the fact that all monies contributed to disaster relief go directly to that successful effort. You do not find such a 100% commitment elsewhere. The efforts are universal & that, though overwhelming, says a lot about our church mission. Our synod is a vital part of this ELCA mission, both with fund raising & the contribution of manpower when asked.
- I am too new to my leadership role to have a good response to this question. I have attended one synod conference and totally enjoyed the experience!
- I am not sure.
- I am not hearing anything about the synod through the local church
- Helping us to find a new pastor! The Reformation 500 event we had with the St. Raymond Roman Catholic Church
- helping hungry and homeless
- Helping congregations with MAP assessments. It helps to provide clear information about where a church is at, where the church wants to be, and what changes are needed to be the people God is calling us to be.
- Hard to say. The synod is not supportive of its congregations. There is much bureaucracy in the assigning of pastors, many of whom are not well-suited to their congregations. More and more congregations are closing, even though only a few years ago they were vibrant, large congregations.
- Hard to say.
- Global Mission and Youth Ministry
- Getting assistance when we need it, for example, documents, advice, etc. Bishop Claire is also the best joy, but we are prejudiced because she is a member of our congregation.
- generosity program
- ecumenism
- Ecumenical collaboration for social justice
- Don't know. Have not been informed what the synod is doing.
- Don't know.
- Do not know.
- Diversity.
- Diakonia

- Dean Paul Sorcek of Advent Church, Richboro, was very helpful during our search for an Associate Pastor. He was supportive, able to see the big picture and not get bogged down in red tape.
- complete communication with members and visitors
- Companion Synod Partnership
- Collegial support; knowing that we're not 'in it alone'
- collaboration of churches and outreach
- Coaching clergy
- Claire has done a terrific job in accomplishing more results with less money. Trying to follow her means stepping into big shoes.
- Church without Walls. New LYO. Upper Bucks Conference.
- call of new pastors to congregations, enabling call of LGBT pastors.
- Bishop's Convocation - fellowship
- Best joy is the support I feel in the way the churches in our synod have shared in the ministry of the welcome church recognizing that we also have something to offer them despite our economic poverty and other challenges.
- Bear Creek Camp
- As a pastor, I appreciate the collegiality we share.
- Anti-Racism Advocacy, inter-denominational/inter-faith dialog, hunger advocacy
- All the Outreach programs
- Active Presence in Philadelphia.
- Ability to listen and help various congregations solve various church problems and provide help when needed.
- A connection to ministries beyond our congregation, such as social ministry and Tanzania.
- 1. Working with young/new pastors who are revitalizing the congregations they serve. 2. Focusing on building sustainability for Lutheran ministries in underserved areas - urban and rural.
- [Easier to name the "top three" than to name "the best", I've always found.] inspiring, inciting, and standing in support of persons in ministry (including pastors and other rostered persons), including candidacy, youth ministry, outdoor ministry, stirring, enabling and sustaining partnerships--with like-spirited organizations (social ministry, seminary), ecumenical friends in Christ and neighboring synods, and (so marvelous in recent years) our global connections with the ELCT-NED (parish partners, Mwangaza, SEKUMO) offering concrete, personal support to pastors and holding them respectfully accountable in faithfulness to Christ, for baptismally-centered health of leaders and for the life-giving gift of the whole church.
- "God's work. Our hands" provides a great opportunity to serve and love our neighbors and the community at large.
- .
- Youth ministry,

### **3. What skills/gifts will be needed in our next bishop? See attached.**

- Wisdom, resolve, openness to God's Spirit, gratitude.
- Wisdom, courage and skill in providing prayer that is responsive to the concerns of the people.
- What's wrong with the one we have??
- visioning, welcoming of diversity, organized, energetic, open to ideas/flexible
- Visionary Pastoral Administrative
- Vision, strategy, discernment. The ability to inspire others. Either Administrative skills or the ability to put a team together to do the administrative work.
- Vision-casting Pastoral, non-anxious presence Social justice advocacy and leadership

- Vision for the church in this area. Open to the voices of ALL God's people in our area. Ability to mobilize lay people and support them. Seeking ways to redefine ministry in geographic areas rather than closing so many churches. Strong and creative financial management. Conflict resolution.
- vision for growth in membership - urging pastors to develop evangelism programs - provide skills to leaders in congregation - we can't want members to come to us. Also visit our members when they don't attend for 4-6 weeks.
- Vision and Leadership Declaring the Gospel in Word and Deed Caring for Congregations and Roster Leaders facing challenges
- Very important to have significant experience in congregational ministry and in helping congregations to thrive. to focus on strengthening congregations and not get trapped by outside expectations that drain time and energy from that primary focus. Good administrative gifts. Ability to lead. Team working/staff experience. ability to delegate. Excellent communication skills. good health and energy for a very demanding job. ability to prioritize and focus on primary goals/needs for synod.
- Understand the feeling of the people in the pews
- Touch job--caring for pastors and visiting and listening to them. Able to respond to conflict and confront dysfunctional pastors and congregations. Help congregations in finding the best pastor.
- Tons that I am not even aware of, but the one that comes immediately to mind to the courage to convince individual congregations that are resistant to change, that they need to "evolve" or they are going to slowly lose all the members who like the traditional things and there won't be anyone left to take the church into the next generation. It's too much to ask the last few people attending, who have young kids that are exhausting to facilitate this change. We need help and support.
- To listen.
- To have a deep concern for the inner-city ministries
- To encourage the development of preaching skills, to develop relationships with parishes, to interpret and share information and news from the wider church.
- To be a visionary. To be able to relate to clergy and leaders of congregations. To help equip clergy with skills needed to meet a "new day." To lift the mission of the Church beyond the walls of the individual congregations.
- The next bishop will need to spend much more time on our own territory, engaging ALL congregations, SMALL and large.
- The next bishop should be committed to youth and young adult ministry as well as forming future leaders for our church. He/She/They should want to engage with young people in the hopes of helping build our church for the VERY near future. The church is changing, and the new bishop should be engaged in working to help move the church forward instead of leaving it where it currently is. The new bishop should also be committed to evangelical mission and outreach to communities and areas of the city that are desperately in need of God's love and our assistance. Most importantly, the new bishop should be fun and down to earth. He/She/They should be willing to meet the needs of all the people from singing and dancing with the youth, to engaging in conversations of healing with the elderly. The bishop should be approachable and in some words, a friend to everyone in the synod. I would not like to see a Bishop who is focused on the title and being high/mighty - the best leaders encourage others and I hope our new bishop follows in this model that our current bishop has been so good with.
- The next bishop needs to have insight into the congregational experience. S/he should have an idea about what challenges and opportunities congregations are currently facing, especially financial and leadership challenges. S/he should also have a deep commitment to social justice and to helping congregations engage with minorities that may not traditionally have been represented in their congregations as well as engage with social justice issues, i.e. racism, food insecurity, homelessness, the drug epidemic. Finally, s/he should be a strong advocate for diversity within clergy and synod leadership and needs to be proactive in leading congregations towards

being more open to diverse candidates (those who identify as LGBTQAI, those who are of a race other than white, etc.).

- The next bishop needs to be concerned with the success and well-being of the congregations, as well as spear-head things that we can do collectively.
- The next bishop needs to be a visionary who can motivate and lead the current expressions of the Lutheran church to bring us all together more intentionally to express our faith. As the number of people in the pews is decreasing, the number of people working in or receiving services from SMOs is increasing. Is there a way to work together more intentionally and to include congregations, SMOS, the seminaries and colleges in our work together? There is so much strength in our Lutheran communities, but we are not always joined in our work with a shared vision in how we express our faith. We need someone who spends most of their time in our synod advancing the many good things being done in our own community. Someone who is a good communicator, who has passion for our local SMO work, who provides leadership and more hands-on support to local congregations, SMOs, etc. - support that feels like help.
- The next Bishop needs to be a consensus builder. The next Bishop must be able to rejoice that 57% of the people in the pews on Sunday morning in the Northeastern US are Republicans (source: Regional Differences in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America With Overall Comparisons to Southern Baptists by Kenneth Inskip) and stop announcing to these same people the "We are a Liberal Church."
- The knowledge & ability to move the church forward by attracting new membership without alienating current members... The vision to support the congregations who are in pastoral transition when they feel they need a listening ear & guidance... A sincere desire to see current congregations flourish even when they don't fit the norm of what the ELCA sees as its future demographic... A background in evangelism... strength in conflict resolution... strength in conflict resolution...an open mind!
- The bishop should be opening to engaging and integrating the gifts and talents of ALL the clergy (not just the young), rostered leaders, and lay leaders.
- The bishop needs to pay attention to the congregations and pastors of the synod. He/She needs to help congregations and pastors thrive. For the past 10 years our bishop has focused on inter-denominational occasions and conferences. She hasn't visited congregations, except for an occasional installation. The synod isn't thriving; it isn't growing. And when you don't grow, you're dying.
- The bishop is the leader of people and as such, must be able to relate to anybody regardless of race, sex, beliefs, etc. A strong support to the congregations and a vision that helps solve any problems that arise.
- the ability to unify and inspire people
- The ability to think outside the box and bring younger ideas to our synod
- The ability to serve all the churches not just the inner-city ones.
- The ability to reach out to the members of the congregations (in addition to the staff and leaders) to help them understand what the synod is and does and why the synod matters.
- The ability to interact with congregations in a personal way. Our present bishop has so many boundaries to protect that she spends her time with ecumenical people from other denominations. There is a sense of neglect and loss among the congregations in our conference that is echoed in the whole five county region. Young pastors are lauded for their ability to connect with social media. But are they brought forward for their skills in pastoring or because of their naïveté and inability to think critically about leadership? How representative are the members of Synod council? Are the deans those who are willing to engage our bishop in challenging ways, or are they folks who go along to get along? Our bishop is controversy averse and risk averse. Nothing has happened, and he victory lap for her legacy began months ago. Creative and challenging leadership is required. Clusters of congregations that work together on outreach projects and engage ecumenical and community based volunteers are critically needed for a sense of who we are and where Matthew 25 needs to find Jesus at work.

- The ability to define the office over and against the demands & expectations of the ELCA. As we focus on relationships, we need the Bishop to connect with leaders, congregations and social ministry organizations. With a significantly smaller synod staff, the Bishop must play a larger role on the territory of the synod. (For example, I do not have confidence in many of the deans to be effective leaders in congregational transitions and conflicts, and the Bishop may be needed.) What boards and meetings can be delegated to others, so the Bishop can listen and lead? The Bishop needs experience as a Pastor and must be someone who has been active in the synod and hopefully in the ELCA. Not simply because experience is needed, but more importantly the level of involvement shows a commitment to the larger church that the bishop must have. The Bishop must be able to keep confidences and inspire trust. An excellent preacher and teacher.
- Technology base to keep us moving forward & reach all our members.
- Support for the congregations as we face the challenges of providing ministry to our communities of people with such diverse needs. The style of ministry that is comfortable to those over age 65 is not appealing to young adults, or those in their middle years with young families. Our next bishop will need tact and vision to address this need to provide God's message and care to multiple generations of worshipers. Ideally the bishop will be an authentic preacher and a leader who can inspire others to action. Organizational skills would be helpful too.
- strong spiritual and leadership skills along with a vision plan to turn around those declining and local congregations
- Strong embodiment of a living faith, HOPE in Christ to ground brave new institutional realities, Vision for the synod, care for congregations balanced with national/ecumenical/interfaith representation, strong administration skills (to deal with the ecclesiological/constitutional/legal issues that always arise), proven record of emotional maturity, integrity and kindness, and strong self-care skills/boundaries
- Strategic planning - for our missions, for our properties and for energizing the message to engage more participation in our faith. Communications - ability to "tell the story" in various ways/venues/media - make it real to more people; get it out there! Leadership and engagement - set the tone at the top to engage the parish pastors and congregations; generate excitement about what we do Creativity - if insanity is defined as doing the same things over and over and expecting a different result, then it feels the church may be somewhat insane and need new engagement initiatives not yet developed. Create new ways to engage and motivate interest in living Lutheran.
- Strategic planning Urban ministry knowledge/experience Visionary
- Spiritual depth Mature personal discipline the ability to support a wide range of persons and ministries gifts and skills in community building strong commitment to and support of the Office of the Pastor, and those who hold such office
- spiritual caring and encouraging person. a leader that encourages us to think about the most vulnerable
- Someone who listens. Someone who follows through on commitments. Someone who is willing to gather congregational leaders to partner with the synod in various areas to fill gaps in ministry on the synodical level. Someone who is faithful to the calling of Jesus Christ.
- Someone who can inspire the flock to work together to grow the ministry and retain the faithful.
- Someone who can help build connections and bridges between congregations and between the synod and congregations. We need to be more unified and the synod is central in that.
- Someone who resonates with the above items in #2 is committed to the stewardship of personal health and witnesses this to rostered and non-rostered leaders of the church prioritize personal and synod-wide time and resource commitments (note presentation of Augsburg CEO during Bishop Convo 2017) to provide a lively balance between pursuing an articulate mission strategy for the sake of the Gospel and serving as "pastor to pastors" to prosper the gifted leadership of the church. is conversant in money matters, as integral to be a eucharistic church ("We are an offering... all that we have, all that we are, all that we hope to be") is a courageous advocate of justice and mercy issues and the people who suffer when society neglects them

- Someone that is forward thinking and can come up with new ways to keep people involved in Ministry and invite and encourage new people in the ministry of Christ. As Lutherans, we must continue to be reformers.
- Social Media savvy Pastoral
- Shepherd to the people of the synod. A shepherd who regularly visits the churches and knows their challenges, strengths and needs
- Relational abilities. Focus on connecting personally with pastors in the synod. Leadership - shedding things the mainline church needs to leave behind (the low expectations we have of our members), and embracing and promoting the things that make us best (our theology and commitment to our neighbors) Prudence - the ability to listen and weigh inputs regarding complicated circumstances with pastors and churches. Preaching/teaching - if I'm going to have to listen to the bishop every time we get together, he or she better have something interesting and helpful to say.
- reach out to churches that are losing members because of age of congregation. It appears bigger churches that have greater income get all the attention and help
- Racial Reconciliation & Redevelopment
- Public persona. Willing to speak truth to Churchwide. Engaged in the modern reformation of the Church. Makes the theological depth of the Gospel entertaining enough for modern ears to hear (because, yes, we need to be entertained).
- Provide personal support to Trinity by having the Bishop play a greater role at Trinity. Once a year or so doesn't seem to be a great deal of support.
- Promoting and supporting 21st century ministry
- personal connection with the churches, history of successful outreach to the communities; excellent and frequent communication; gifted in creative faith formation;
- Personable and friendly, Easily available to the Pastor and Congregation, and dynamic speaker.
- Patience.
- patience, leadership, discernment, ability to listen, willingness to visit congregations, support to leaders
- patience, humor, courage, eloquence
- Patience, compassion, drive, and a TRUE concern for urban ministry. "In the city for good," doesn't always seem true in SEPA but should be. Understanding of and excitement for urban ministry opportunities is crucial to being relevant and faithful as a synod.
- Pastoral, have a presence with ALL rostered leaders. Be realistic about financial situation of synod and congregations, be willing to make hard decisions concerning congregations that are on life support. Strong relationship and communication skills are essential. And this is more than in email. The bishop needs to visit congregations and pastors. This would reestablish connections.
- Pastoral, administrative, visionary, facilitator.
- Pastoral to all pastor of the synod and congregations; treat congregations with equal grace and support, the is small medium, large from urban to country side rural congregations.
- Outgoing and understanding needs of the congregations in the SEPA synod.
- Our next Bishop will need a drive for social justice issues and a call to work towards connecting the suburban churches and city churches together.
- Our next bishop will be an individual who can facilitate shared ministry strategies between congregations and between congregations and other ministry organizations. He/she will need to understand the dynamics of dwindling, aging congregations, and be able to assure older Lutherans that ministry in our tradition will continue in some new form--if on a greatly reduced budget. The next bishop will need to create a program of articulation of our Lutheran tradition to attract "nones." Perhaps a new emphasis on campus ministry, new mission starts, or social ministry organizations.
- Our next bishop needs to be innovative. Obviously, the church landscape is changing and there is a fair amount of anxiety over declining attendance and budgets and social currency. The next bishop will have to be open to

new ways of doing ministry, and not be threatened by innovation and change. We do NOT need a bishop who is most concerned with theological orthodoxy. Our next bishop needs to be able to make difficult decisions. As our synod is currently reached a crisis around funding our inner-city congregations, it's become clear that collectively we have the resources to do ministry - if we work towards the good of the whole. Preemptively working with dying churches to help them bless new ministries and revitalizing congregations is essential across our church. Our next bishop needs to help pastors work together more. I know that our current campaign is aimed at networking, and I think we need an even stronger emphasis. Our next bishop needs to be a good supervisor of our deans, and have a clear sense as to what purpose our deans are meant to serve (and not serve). As the 'middle management' of the synod, our deans do some of the most important work, and I don't think they've yet been utilized fully or well. Our next bishop needs a commitment to social justice. The light needs to keep shining in the darkness, and we pastor need to know that our bishop is leading us AND has our back when we are preaching and leading in ways that are faithful but that might bring criticism or anger.

- Our next bishop must have excellent interpersonal skills, be open to all people of color
- Our next Bishop (if white) should deal with issues of institutional as well as personal racism; if a person of color, our next Bishop should have strong support in serving in a racist institution. Our next Bishop should also be grounded psychologically (maybe have a therapist) and spiritually (a spiritual director). Also, our next Bishop needs to understand that we really are in the city for good and look at what is causing the demise of many of our city churches.
- Organized, connected, forward looking, creative, imaginative, collaborative
- Openness to new ways of doing ministry that are unconventional and even risky. I think our next bishop should be open to all types of ministries such as multi-point parishes and collaborative ministries between congregations.
- Open-minded person, Visit congregations on a yearly basis, more synod wide well publicized events
- Open to new ideas, engaging of youth
- Open to diversity, welcoming, the ability to lead but also to listen. The ability to make changes or use resources within the synod for congregations that need help because of declining membership or people. Outreach and fostering new relationships in the community.
- Ongoing reformation commitment.
- Not sure what the role of the bishop is supposed to be? I could offer general opinions of what makes a good leader. But as for a bishop specifically, no idea. I am not sure what responsibilities traditionally should fall on a bishop vs. a congregational pastor vs...?
- Needs to understand the church is NOT the building, that we need more outreach.
- Navigating urban/suburban divide, engaging in anti-racism justice work, non-anxious presence, visionary leadership
- Multitasking, ability to deal with loss without taking personally. To have energy to move from one thing to the next with very little time for reflection.
- Mediator, Inspirational Leadership, Pastoral Heart
- Leadership, spirituality, gift of proclamation, concern for urban ministry, ecumenism, concern for justice.
- Leadership, compassion, knowledge of urban church issues, financial concerns of supporting churches - discernment of where our church needs to go!
- leadership and enthusiasm
- Leadership - and helping junior pastors develop leadership skills so that they can strategically lead their congregations.
- leadership
- Interpersonal Communication Skills, and counseling skills.
- Integrity, honesty, and leadership skills.

- Inspiring and visible presence to the public. Vision for the church to be a transforming movement in our communities. Ability to build and equip teams to carry out acts of ministry. Speaking the truth in love to both the culture and to congregations that are inward-focused.
- Inspiration, focus on local grow and outreach. A new vision of what is possible to recreate our church. Business and planning skills would be quite helpful.
- Incredible listening and communication skills, and a willingness to step out and visit congregations in the synod.
- Inclusiveness based on God's Love and the grace of Christ
- Important that the bishop travel to congregations and/or send staff to make presence known. I realize cutbacks in funding make this difficult.
- I would like to see a shepherd, someone who is able to bring out the best in our pastoral leaders and congregations. Skills/Gifts: gift of pastoral presence; gift of time; gift of discernment
- I think some financial management skills particularly in finding way to support struggling urban congregations in our Synod.
- I think a good pastor who cares for leaders, pastorally, prophetically, and administratively. We have such a unique and diverse synod, being able to be many things to many people will be a key for a leader for our unique synod.
- I feel the Bishop will need to be someone willing to be involved with all people and the youth and children especially. They should be approachable and someone who is concerned for the well-being of the Church and the world.
- I don't know. I am thinking the gift of being a Pastor along with leadership, Communication and organizational skills.
- I don't know, because the nature of the church has changed. I suppose being a good administrator-- or having one on staff (like Yvonne Curtis). Someone with a sense of humor and passion for congregational ministry. Someone who can hold pastors (and congregations) accountable.
- I believe the next bishop needs the gift of patience and system design. These gifts are needed to help improve the relationship between church and pastor as relationships change.
- I am praying that our next bishop would the value of the small church. I often felt left on my own as a pastor of a small church trying to stay relevant. I have had to go outside the ELCA to find resources that would assist us. As a synod, we are behind the curve when one looks beyond our denomination.
- How to make the Lutheran Church more viable for the younger generation 30 years on up.
- Honesty, integrity, walk the talk, have a clue on parish ministry,
- Have a firm grasp of the Lutheran Faith. Visibility throughout the synod, ease of access. Mediator, counselor, Pastoral.
- gifts of discernment, leadership skills of diplomacy
- Financial statement and budgeting understanding. A person willing to make difficult choices regarding churches at risk. A shepherd to the rostered leaders. A good administrator.
- excellent communicator courageous administrator compassionate shepherd
- Evangelism, enthusiasm and energetic and open to constant change
- Evangelism
- Energy, perseverance, focus, positive attitude, being centered in the gospel, compassion, respect for rostered leaders and congregations, courage.
- Encouraging use of lay involvement within Synod and congregations Finding resources to increase use of technology How to make best use of limited resources Shepherd to the clergy
- Encouragement in the face of societal shifts that are changing the church; support for pastors; vision-casting for a new kind of Church; helping churches to consolidate/collaborate/cooperate; building a shared identity that goes beyond buildings and congregational history

- Edifier - One who sees the church 'not as hierarchy, vertical, but as a priesthood of all believers, horizontal,' using the imagery of first Luther himself, but most recently said well in her book Christianity after Religion, church historian and author Dr. Diana Butler Bass. Empowered - One who conveys the love and grace of Jesus in presence and is present in congregational life, not just as installer, ordainer, or guest preacher Exemplify er- One who has led in and with the grassroots of engagement, advocacy, and alternative leadership Excellent Pro claimer - One is loves to preach and can do so in alternative ways
- Ecumenical passion, interest to support struggling congregations, ability to promote diversity through the synod.
- Courage, passion, and the ability to lead. Someone who can help us to reach those who don't trust the institutionalized church.
- Continuing to assist other congregations through the challenges to traditional expectations. By this I mean the LGBTQ community is finally finding the courage to come through our doors as their true selves, which may be unexpected for some congregants and therefore a difficult change to accept.
- Continuing leadership development for clergy and lay members. Compassion for the needy, immigrants, and those on the "margins". Willingness to engage in tough ecumenical issues. Fund raiser -- in Jesus' name". (It's not that the members don't have the money, but we have not been inspired to give it to the Church.) And equitable distribution of resources.
- Continue to push outward in terms of communicating and reaching young families, providing services that will demonstrate our commitment to serve and love our neighbors
- Conflict resolution, listening, leadership, communication, humility's
- Conflict management, vision, discernment, administration skills
- Conflict Management, Kindness,
- Compassionate Faith Sensible to diversity (African descent, African American, Hispanic, LGBTQ) Preacher Good Steward Spiritual Seek justice for those with limitations, poverty and oppressed. Excellent interpersonal relationship skills. Availability
- Compassion Cultural Sensitivity Anti-racism understandings
- Communication: both oral and written, especially written as much of synod outreach happens via the website and other digital platforms. (And can the writing skills be verified? I thought we were hiring a pastor with good writing skills because of the ministerial profile written for the call process, but once hired, it was clear that document received the benefit of editing and did not accurately represent the pastor's writing skills.) Facilitating vision planning: the broader challenge of declining numbers in mainline Protestantism, including the ELCA, suggests someone who can both generate ideas and harness the ideas of others to keep finding a relevant (humane) role in an increasingly secular and diverse society. Relationship building: the population of the synod is diverse racially and culturally, which results in some different expectations, so the bishop will need to be able to work with a range of groups.
- Communication, Responsibility, it would not hurt to see the bishop at youth events also.
- Communication, leadership(inspiration)
- Communication with all church communities in the Synod. Administrative skills to face the challenges of diminished attendance and support at the congregational level the ability to create a new future that is meaningful for the work of the Synod
- Communication - being able to support congregations through evaluation and potential change so they can grow their ministries.
- Communicate with the congregations. Let history be lessons in life not an anchor and continuing beating of those not on this earth at the time.
- Clearly our bishop needs to attract talented, trustworthy, wise, dedicated, ("practically perfect"), thoughtful, church workers and leaders. I'm becoming less convinced that faithful, committed people are applying to take on church responsibilities. (What about getting more committed retired people to get involved?) The bishop

needs to provide guidance for the workers and hold them accountable in their interactions with congregants. Our bishop also needs to do effective planning for financial management and meaningful worship leadership.

- Champion of our faith
- Caring, people oriented, humble, Biblical messages
- Care for ALL congregations with demonstrated love for SEPA people. Involvement in their transitions.
- Build on Bishop Burkat's personality and have willingness to be more present in public discourse.
- Bringing us together to support new ideas the bishop must strengthen the Lutheran Churches for the future. Accept new directions and tough challenges, like confronting racism.
- Bishop should be aware and supporting not only of rostered clergy and lay ministers but also of congregations, especially of those in transition. Synod support is especially important to them.
- Be a consensus builder and avoid being an autocrat. Don't play favorites. Approach each situation with an objective eye. Be more locally focused. Support ministries that are working even if not identical to bishop's vision.
- An effective communicator A humble preacher A global thinker/visionary A healthy sense of humor Being approachable and not too churchy Not shy about her/his love of Jesus
- able to think outside of the box someone who can say "no" someone who is a dedicated disciple of Jesus Christ someone who encourages discipleship in all congregations
- Ability to unite the congregations, or maybe I should connect the various churches, so that we can continue to support one another and learn about the wonderful ministries that each church has.
- Ability to speak to diverse groups and really be able to understand where they are coming from. An ability to move away from dogma and literal interpretations of our faith and reach a contemporary world and build the church from all people.
- Ability to re-imagine what it means to be church together. Willingness to make us uncomfortable so that we can grow in faith and in witness.
- Ability to message and attract people to the church community.
- Ability to match up pastors' abilities with congregations' specific needs. Communicate with lay members of synod. Be able to think creatively and convince pastors and church members to be more creative. Ability to reach out to unchurched.
- Ability to drive networking for our congregations and parishioners, encourage and support innovative ministries, support effective communications and develop new ways to communicate, encourage and equip new leaders, current leaders and specifically lay leaders. Ability to bring people together. Be able to juggle strategic programs, administrative responsibilities, congregation needs, preaching engagements, ecumenical collaborating opportunities, social justice issues...and so on, with their full attention.
- Ability to continue the encouragement of advocacy for anti-racism, hunger, community outreach and the ability to seamlessly with leaders of other faiths and denominations to emphasize the need to work together for the sake of the world. The ability to encourage and empower not only ministers of word and sacrament, but also empower those who have been called to be ministers of word and service.
- Ability to connect with all members not just "special groups."
- A wish to promote Christian belief and values Enhance study opportunities of the Bible through Synod learning programs Encourage all pastors to preach from the Bible Acceptance of all peoples
- A vision for the future and mission; organizational skills; an openness and receptivity to change and growth in different and new ways.
- A sense of compassion, respect and support. Love for the church universal, in other words, not just "our" Lutheran synod. Good physical and mental health. Energy and enthusiasm.
- A personal relationship with Jesus Christ that is infectious. Knowledge of Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Knowledge of Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod. Vision of where the Holy Spirit is guiding. Aa team

leader, with the ability to build community/relationships. A good steward of resources. Able to deal with conflict. Community Organizer, speak against injustice and seeks diversity.

- A pastoral presence, a willingness to engage conversation
- A pastor who is all inclusive without an emphasis on any one race or lifestyle. The bishop needs to emphasize teaching the gospel and growing the church. How does the church attract & keep the millennials?
- A pastor who can continue to lead us as a synod in transformational ministry. This person should be a courageous leader who take seriously both the Great Commandment and Great Commission.
- A heart for the good news of God & what God's people need & the backbone to say "No" to what people want.
- A good communicator, willing to listen to all under his/her care with compassion, visit all congregations under his/her care and act like a good shepherd in taking care of the rostered leaders under his/her care. Must have humor!
- A good business sense, someone good at vision but not living in the clouds, not someone we expect
- A focus on youth and young adult ministry. They are the future of the church.
- A compassionate heart, strong backbone, and a desire to encourage congregations to follow Jesus's lead of inclusiveness. Our youth seem to understand that life is ever-changing and are embracing Martin Luther's' teachings in their constantly evolving stream of consciousness: "I refuse to accept the idea that man is mere flotsam and jetsam in the river of life, unable to influence the unfolding events which surround him. I refuse to accept the view that mankind is so tragically bound to the starless midnight of racism and war that the bright daybreak of peace and brotherhood can never become a reality." It would do us all good to follow the lead of our younger generation.
- a business leader who have a vision for growth in congregations
- a bishop who can connect with younger pastors and parishioners, articulating a vision for the future of our Church.
- A "mission director" mindset for congregations both inner city and suburbs. Technology for communication...put video clips from the bishop with information/stories, etc. to inspire and teach congregations how to navigate the 21st century landscape Ability to build great working relationships with rostered leaders, congregation leaders, as well as interfaith and other ministry partners
- 1) Standing up for biblical principles and not just giving in to what is popular in the culture today. 2) The ability to see all sides of an issue or incident, not just the minority side. 3) The ability to bring people together of different races, faiths, political persuasions, economic status etc. We need our religious and spiritual leaders in the world to "Take Back the Streets" if you will. This country seems to be losing ground to non-believers and it must stop.
- 1) leadership with all clergy and all faiths 2) community with all clergy and all faiths 3) idea planner
- 1. Love the Lord Jesus. 2. Be willing to listen to the lay people and clergy. 3. Able to make wide decisions.
- 1. Capacity to build bridges while retaining distinct Lutheran witness across denominational, interfaith, political, racial, cultural, class and language boundaries. 2. Hopeful, creative and focused vision for the future coupled with business and organizational savvy to develop the human and financial resources needed to sustain and propel that vision. 3. Pastoral skill to handle conflicts and difficult personal and congregational situations that arise.
- 1. A positive attitude about the work of the Holy Spirit, and a deep faith that God is at work here. 2. A commitment to keep the Synod involved in the workings of social ministry. This means not merely encouraging individuals to participate in feeding the hungry and caring for widows and children, but organizationally committing to oversee the work of its social ministry organizations, especially by ensuring that the historical and stated missions of its SMOs is in fact observed and maintained and improved, not forsaken. This will demand of the bishop an ability to identify able Synod Council members, not merely respond to volunteers, who understand their role on Council as Elders of this Synod. 3. Delegation skills in choosing and assigning work to Deans, who will probably continue to be his or her assistants. whose work will be critical to the maintaining of a

Lutheran congregational presence in this region as well as a Lutheran social ministry presence that is clearly congregational/church-related and publicly "owned" by our synod, while being truly ecumenical.

- 1. A personal vision statement for the synod before beginning. 2. A Synodical ministry profile that provides data about the congregations and addresses the following questions: a. Why the baptized membership of the congregations in the five county synod area has declined every year since 1920, and over 80,000 since 1968? b. What happened to the 5,322 African-American members lost since 1993? c. Why have over 64 congregations closed since 1945? d. Why did the synod allow the birthplace of the Lutheran Church in America to close? e. Does the interim ministry system with prolonged vacancies really accomplish anything other than provide work for retired and/or incompetent pastors? f. Why pastors don't complete their parochial reports?
- 1-Vision and the gift of empowerment/motivation to help us move forward in being the church in today's world. 2-the ability to connect people- within and beyond the church, 3- leadership to honestly address the tough issues of today
- \* An ability to connect with clergy and lay as we struggle together in a new church and a new world. \* Spiritual gifts more so than administrative. To the extent that there are administration tasks that need to be done, we need to find other ways to do them rather than directly through the bishop. \* A commitment to justice, equality, and inclusion.
- 'According to the gospel the power of the keys or of the bishops is a power and command of God to preach the gospel, to forgive or retain sin, and to administer and distribute the sacraments. For Christ sent out the apostles with this command: "As the Father has sent me, so I send you....Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." The same power of the keys or of the bishops is used and exercised only by teaching and preaching God's Word and by administering the sacraments to many persons or to individuals, depending on one's calling,' Apology to the Augsburg Confession, XXVII.5-8.
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- -opening the minds of our members to tolerate and accept people of all races, religions, sexual orientation, and any differences -As we seem to be in a world where many people do not consider faith of any kind a high priority, I see a need for our synod to look at what we as Lutheran congregations can do to incorporating things into worship services and activities/events that engage our younger generations and all people.
- - Vision for drawing congregations and leaders together to proclaim the gospel, instead of trying to do things the way they always have. - Ability to listen and relate to people of all backgrounds - an understanding of and experience in congregations
- We need a bishop that can see into the future and help us to discern ways to connect our communities and help people come back to church. It is very discouraging to see numbers decline or stay the same when we live in a world of such darkness. We need to learn in the 21st-century how to share the good news and to encourage people to come back to workshop. I feel that this needs to come from our leadership and that our bishop needs to drive this to push congregations to move towards current technologies and learn how to utilize different methods of communication to reach out to our communities.
- Inclusiveness
- A public leader, conflict management, Have a vision