

#### **ABOUT THE PROFILE**

The profile of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod was developed as an equivalent to a congregational *Ministry Site Profile*. The Transition Team's intention was to provide:

- an overview of the synod territory and congregational composition,
- a general explanation of the synod's finances,
- information about Rostered Ministers, the Conference Deans and Synod Staff,
- \* the role of the Bishop, and
- the results of a synod-wide survey intended to highlight the qualities needed in a bishop and the current vitality of the synod.

#### ABOUT THIS PRESENTATION

This abbreviated presentation was created to assist congregations and Voting Members of the 2024 Synod Assembly better understand the role of the bishop and the needs of synod. It focuses on three aspects of the Synod Profile:

- \* the constitutional responsibilities of the synod bishop;
- ❖ input from Bishop Davenport on the ongoing role of the bishop; and
- \* the results of the synod-wide survey.



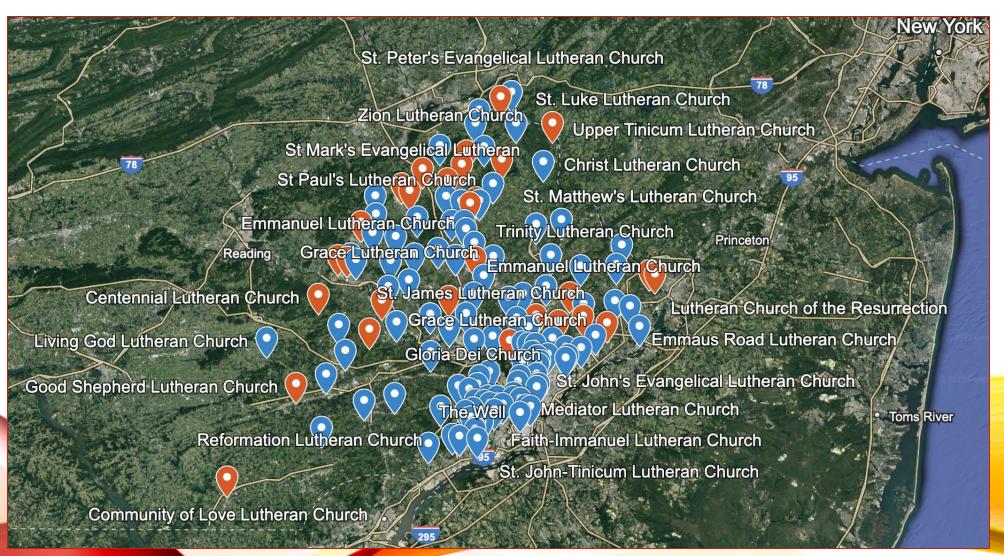
#### **OUR MISSION**

Activated by the gifts of the Holy Spirit, we equip the saints, for building up the body of Christ.



Synod Assembly, 2023

#### SYNOD TERRITORY





## THE CONSTITUTIONAL ROLE OF BISHOP

The Synod's constitution states that the bishop shall be elected by the Synod Assembly.

The bishop shall be a minister of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

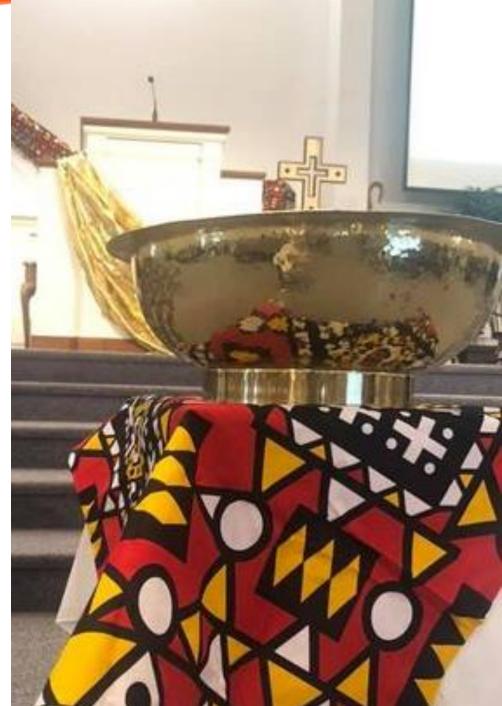
CONSTITUTIONAL ROLE OF BISHOP



In union with all ELCA ministers of Word and Sacrament the bishop is

- called to speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed,
- advocating dignity and justice and equity for all people,
- working for peace and reconciliation among the nations,
- caring for the marginalized, and
- \*embracing and welcoming a racially and ethnically diverse population.

As this synod's pastor, the bishop shall **preach**, **teach**, and administer the **sacraments** in accord with the Confession of Faith of this church.



CONSTITUTIONAL ROLE OF BISHOP

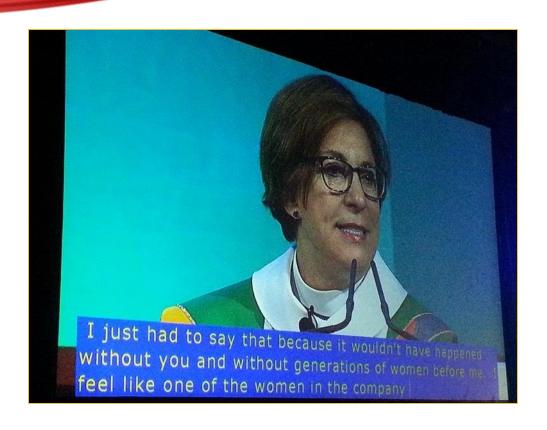


They are to provide pastoral care and leadership for this synod, its congregations, its ministers of Word and Sacrament, and its ministers of Word and Service.

Bishops **ordain**, **consecrate and install** rostered ministers.



CONSTITUTIONAL ROLE OF BISHOP



The bishop shall exercise leadership in the **mission** of this church and in so doing:

**interpret** and **advocate** the mission and theology of the whole church;

**lead** in fostering support for and commitment to the mission of this church within this synod;

coordinate the use of the resources available to this synod as it seeks to promote the health of this church's life and witness in the areas served by this synod. The bishop shall submit a **report** to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly concerning this synod's life and work; and **advise** and **counsel** this synod's related institutions and organizations.



The bishop shall **practice leadership** in strengthening the **unity** of the Church and in so doing:

- exercise oversight of the preaching, teaching, and administration of the sacraments within this synod in accord with the Confession of Faith of this church;
- be responsible for administering the constitutionally established processes for the resolution of controversies and for the discipline of rostered ministers and congregations of this synod.





#### The bishop shall

- be the chief **ecumenical** officer of this synod;
- be a member of the Conference of Bishops and consult regularly with other synod bishops;
- foster awareness of other churches throughout the Lutheran world communion and, where appropriate, engage in contact with leaders of those churches;
- cultivate communion in faith and mission with appropriate Christian judicatory leaders functioning within the territory of this synod; and
- be ex officio a member of the Churchwide Assembly.

The bishop shall **oversee** and **administer** the work of this synod, serving as president of the synod corporation and be the **chief executive** and administrative officer of this synod; presiding at all meetings of the Synod Assembly and provide for the preparation of agendas; ensuring that the constitution and bylaws of the synod and of the churchwide organization are duly observed within this synod, and that the actions of the synod in conformity therewith are carried into effect; etc.



CONSTITUTIONAL ROLE OF BISHOP

#### The bishop shall

- direct and guide the work of the other synod officers;
- exercise supervision over the work of all synod staff members;
- appoint all committees for which provision is not otherwise made;
- be a member of all committees and any other organizational units of the synod, except as otherwise provided in this constitution;
- provide for preparation and maintenance of synod rosters annually
- provide for prompt reporting to the secretary of this church as stipulated in the constitution
- provide for preparation and maintenance of a roster of the congregations of this synod and the names of the laypersons who have been elected to represent them; and
- appoint a statistician of the synod.

#### THOUGHTS FROM BISHOP DAVENPORT



The Role of the Bishop is fundamentally what is written in the ELCA Constitution. The constitutional role has not changed and is accurate, but

- It changes depending on what is going on in the church and the world.
- It will be defined by the new bishop.
- It will be shaped by world and local events.
- It is to be discerned in conversation with constituents.
- It is and will be led by the Holy Spirit and the voice of God.
- It is defined by how it is lived and how you show up.

#### It's being the pastor to the pastor in times of crisis.

- Being called during a pandemic meant a real shift.
- The normal order ramped down and new ways of being amped up.
- There was a flurry to figure out how to do communion and how to continue to worship together.
- Led to an appreciation of holy cyberspace and how to worship in and out of the sanctuary
- Pastors became First Responders. The bishop needed to be there for them, to have their back as they made decisions and to help them with making tough decisions.



#### The Role of Bishop is always changing.

- Changes can be based on church and civic leadership
  - Who will be elected president?
  - Dealing with red, blue and purple political divisions has become a large part of family and church life. How do we have these conversations?
  - Who are key leaders within the ELCA?
- Change can center on the theological conversations that are happening in people's homes and in our churches.

### The expectations of the Role of Bishop are doable.

- When they are lived out based on the synodical make-up
- They require mindfulness toward healthy balance and self care.



### BISHOP DAVENPORT'S THOUGHTS ON THE GIFTS MOST NEEDED

- Administration
- Knowing (learning) how systems work (ELCA, synod, congregations)
- Ability to build relationships and work with a wide variety of people.
- Willingness to get to know all of the players
- Knowledge of budget building
- Willingness to show up
- Have a spirit wide open to loving





- 322 respondents
- ❖ 70% were laypeople
- ❖ More than 50% were over the age of 65
- ❖ 87% of those responding identified as white
- ❖ 58% identified as female

#### QUALITIES TO THRIVE AS BISHOP



The Transition Team developed a list of characteristics that might be seen as helping a pastor to thrive.

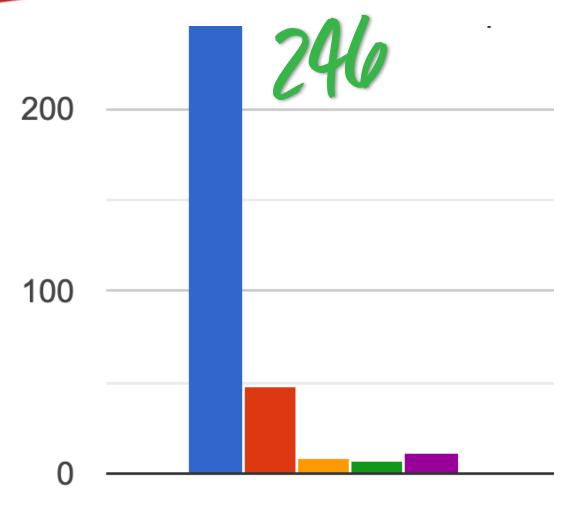
Survey participants were asked to consider the role of bishop and rate each quality on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being *critical* to thrive as a bishop and 5 being *optional* for a bishop.

SURVEY RESPONSES: QUALITIES TO THRIVE

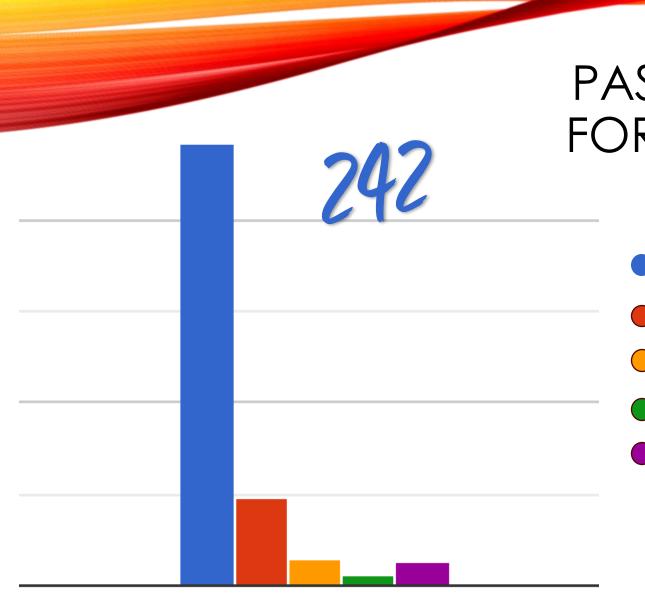


 Ability to persevere A committed evangelist • Spiritual mentor Gifted preacher Talented writer Willingness to fully discern the heart of a problem and engage in creative problem solving Strong understanding of ELCA structures and constitutions Realistic optimism and hope for moving the church forward SURVEY RESPONSES: QUALITIES TO THRIVE





- 1 − Critical to thrive as a bishop (246)
- **●** 2 − (48)
- 0.03 (88)
- **●** 4 − (7)
- 5 Optional for a bishop (12)



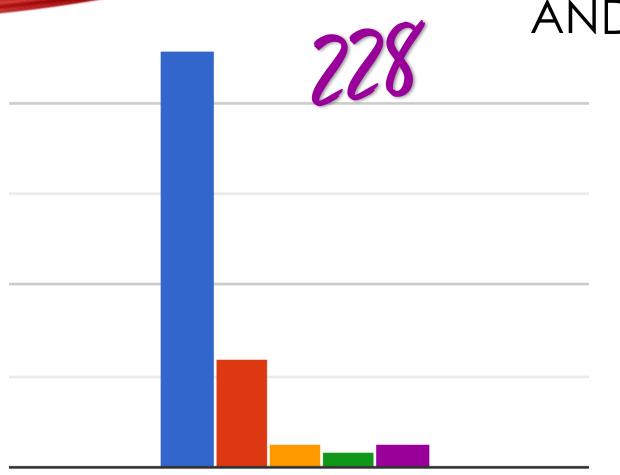
### PASSION AND ENTHUSIASM FOR LEADING THE CHURCH

- 1 Critical to thrive as a bishop (242)
- 2 (48)
- 0 3 (14)
- **●** 4 − (6)
- 5 Optional for a bishop (13)

#### ABILITY TO BUILD TRUST

- 1 Critical to thrive as a bishop (229)
- **●** 2 − (69)
- 3 (5)
- **●** 4 − (8)
- 5 Optional for a bishop (12)





1 – Critical to thrive as a bishop (228)

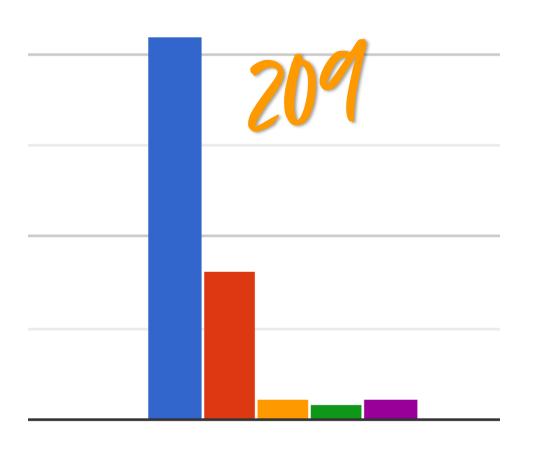
2 - (60)

0.3 - (13)

**●** 4 − (9)

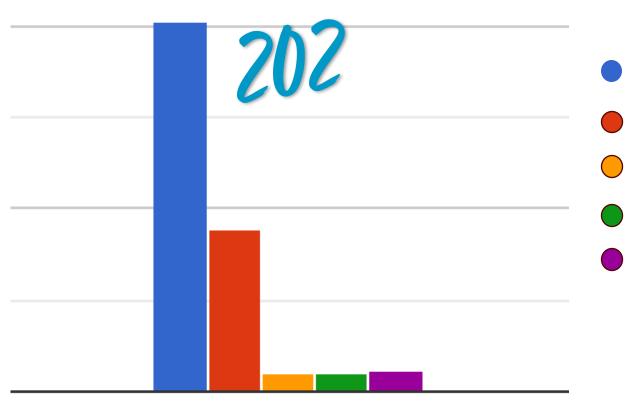
5 – Optional for a bishop (13)

### REALISTIC OPTIMISM AND HOPE FOR MOVING THE CHURCH FORWARD



- 1 Critical to thrive as a bishop (209)
- 2 (81)
- 0 3 (12)
- **●** 4 − (9)
- 5 Optional for a bishop (12)

## WILLINGNESS TO FULLY DISCERN THE HEART OF A PROBLEM AND ENGAGE IN CREATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING



- 1 Critical to thrive as a bishop (202)
- 2 (89)
- 0.03 (10)
- **●** 4 − (10)
- 5 Optional for a bishop (12)

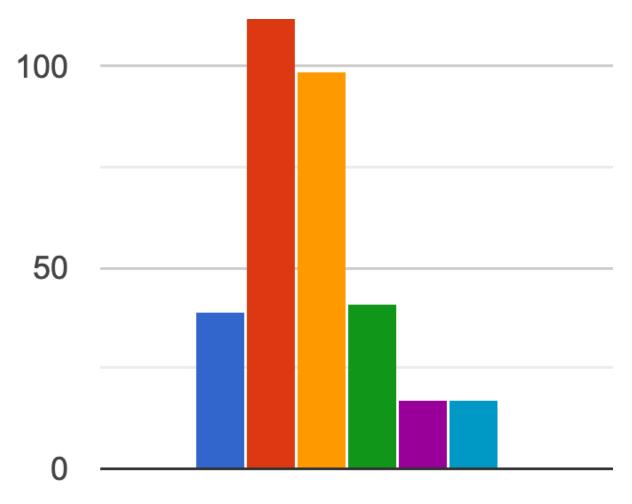
#### SYNOD VITALITY

Church vitality can be measured in several ways. Each of these activities can contribute to the health and well being of ministry settings. Survey participants were asked to consider how the synod currently rates in eight areas. There were six possible responses.

- 1 Excellent
- 2 Good
- 3 Adequate
- 4 Somewhat Ineffective
- 5 Not Happening
- 6 Unsure

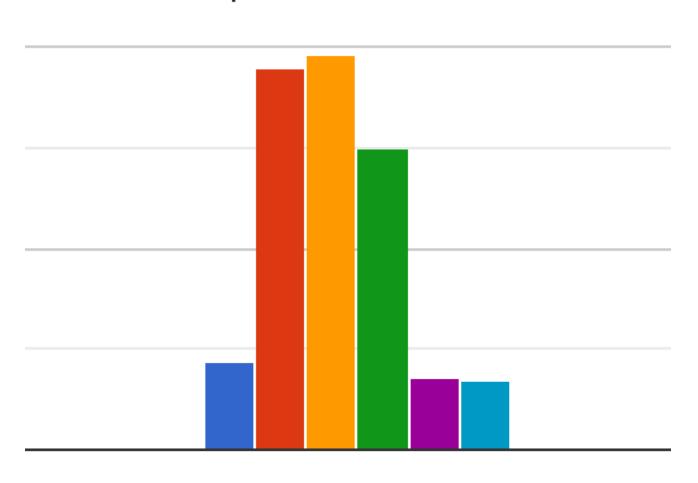
### OFFERS INNOVATIVE AND INSPIRED WORSHIP

- 1 Excellent (39)
- 2 Good (112)
- 3 Adequate (99)
- 4 Somewhat Ineffective (41)
- 5 Not Happening (17)
- 6 Unsure (17)



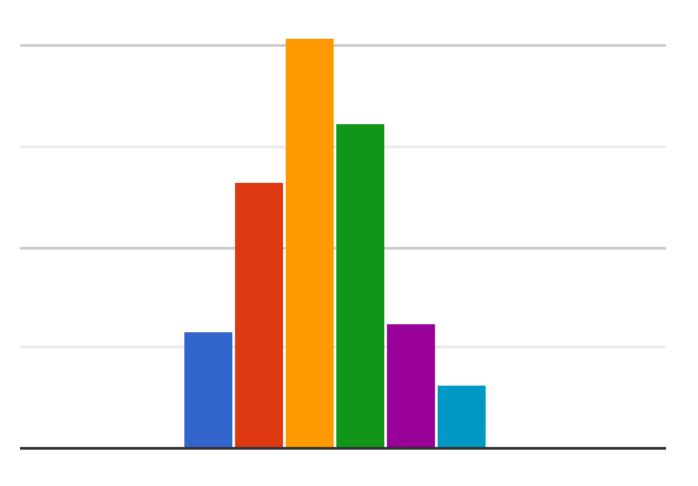
### ENCOURAGES AND PROMOTES LIFELONG LEARNING FOR ALL MEMBERS

- 1 Excellent (22)
- 2 Good (95)
- 3 Adequate (98)
- 4 Somewhat Ineffective (75)
- 5 Not Happening (18)
- 6 Unsure (17)



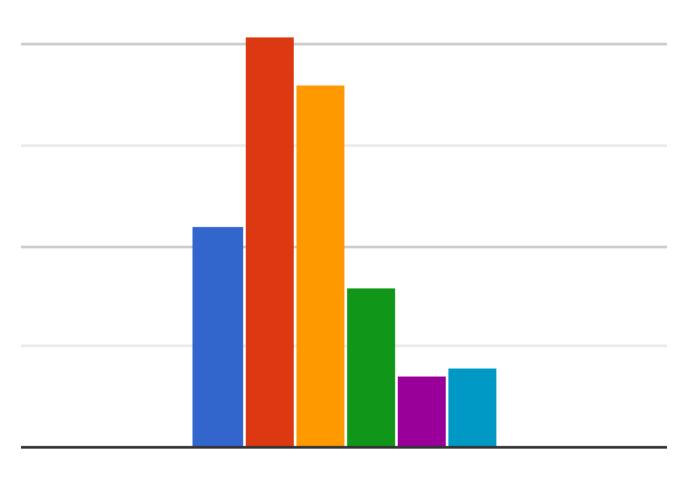
# LEADS AND SUPPORTS CONGREGATIONS IN INTENTIONAL AND AUTHENTIC EVANGELISM

- 1 Excellent (29)
- 2 Good (66)
- 3 Adequate (102)
- 4 Somewhat Ineffective (81)
- 5 Not Happening (31)
- 6 Unsure (16)



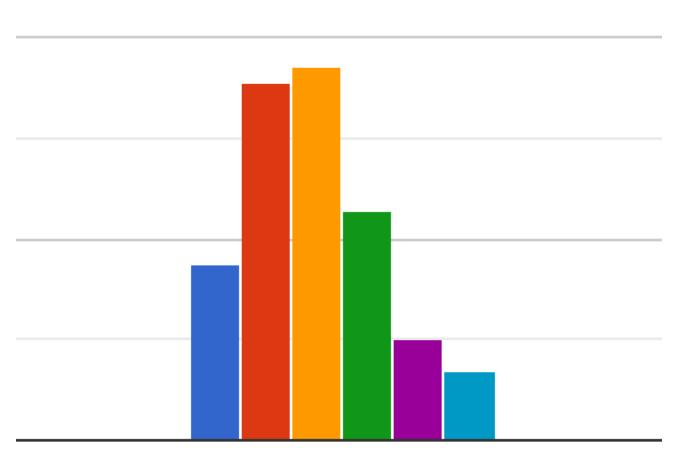
## AN OUTWARD INCARNATIONAL FOCUS THAT MODELS HOW TO BE JESUS' HANDS AND FEET

- 1 Excellent (55)
- 2 Good (102)
- 3 Adequate (90)
- 4 Somewhat Ineffective (40)
- 5 Not Happening (18)
- 6 Unsure (20)



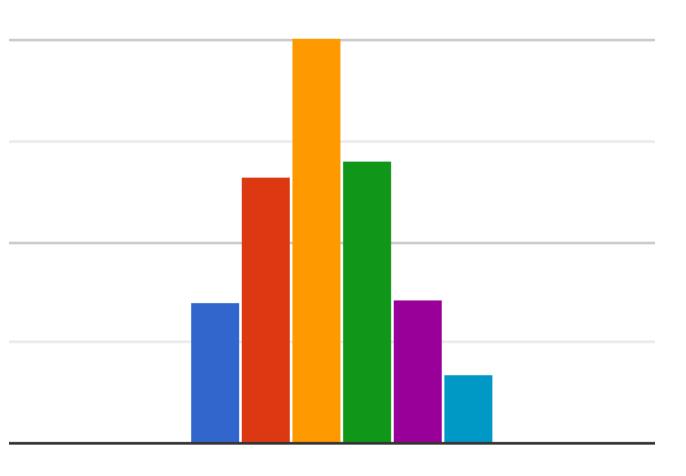
# EMPOWERS SERVANT LEADERSHIP WITHIN CONGREGATIONS AND THE LARGER CHURCH

- 1 Excellent (44)
- 2 Good (89)
- 3 Adequate (93)
- 4 Somewhat Ineffective (57)
- 5 Not Happening (25)
- 6 Unsure (17)



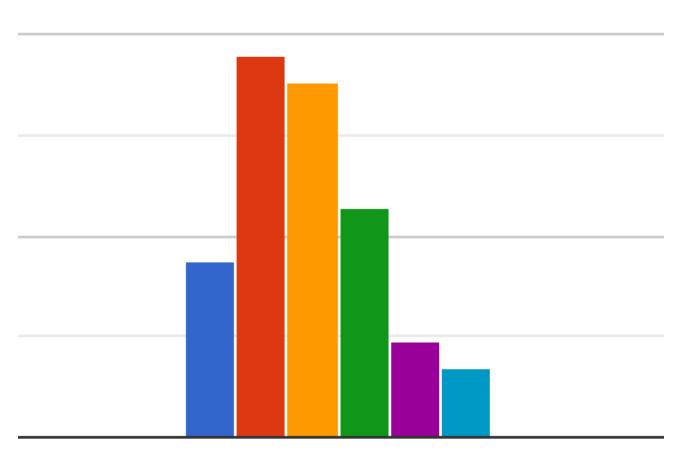
# PROVIDES OPPORTUNITIES TO DEVELOP AND NURTURE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN CONGREGATIONS AND MEMBERS

- 1 Excellent (35)
- 2 Good (66)
- 3 Adequate (101)
- 4 Somewhat Ineffective (70)
- 5 Not Happening (36)
- 6 Unsure (17)



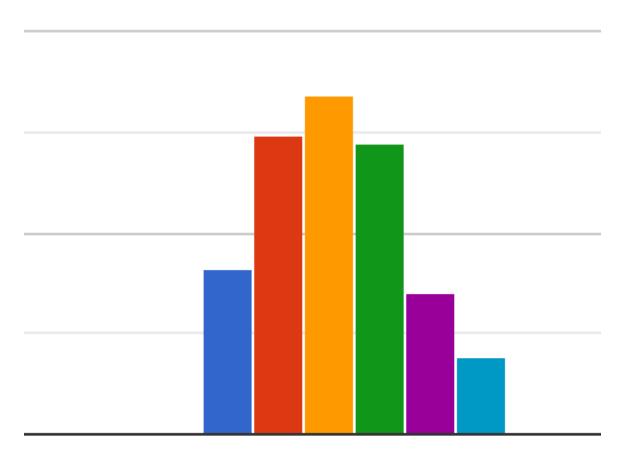
### PROMOTES A SHARED MISSION AND COMMON GOALS FOR THE FUTURE OF THE SYNOD

- 1 Excellent (44)
- 2 Good (95)
- 3 Adequate (88)
- 4 Somewhat Ineffective (57)
- 5 Not Happening (24)
- 6 Unsure (17)



# CULTIVATES AND ENCOURAGES RESILIENCY AMONG CONGREGATIONS THAT ISN'T FOCUSED PURELY ON ATTENDANCE AND FINANCES

- 1 Excellent (41)
- $\bullet$  2 Good (74)
- 3 Adequate (84)
- 4 Somewhat Ineffective (72)
- 5 Not Happening (35)
- 6 Unsure (19)



Survey participants were asked three open ended questions. All responses were reviewed by members of the Transition Team who categorized the answers.

In the following slides, the top areas in each category have been shared, along with some more detailed thoughts.



In a rapidly changing culture, which was dramatically impacted by the pandemic, how can the synod support congregations to accomplish God's work?<sup>6</sup>

### 1. Improve Communication - both mass and individual (99)

- Clear communication about the needs of congregations in the synod.
- Keep asking "what do congregations want?"
- Clearly share important updates on topics such as worship practices, particularly in a time of uncertainty such as the pandemic.
- Communicate more with non-rostered leaders in congregations and make sure to follow-up on message from lay people.

### 2. Visit (80)

"Listen to what congregations have to say. Visit them!"

- Regular visitation to congregations by the bishop and synod staff. If possible, every congregation would be visited in a year.
- Practice intentional accompaniment, specifically through pastoral care (prayer, active listening, mutual care and consolation, not counseling) for rostered leaders.
- Congregations in the "far reaches" of the synod and those in the inner city feel that the synod staff could be more accessible. Some feel a disconnect.
- Greater interaction with laity.

### 3. Help congregations embrace new paradigms as they move forward (78)

"[The church] needs to find a way to be relevant in a society that no longer sees value in religious institutions."

- Suggest specific actions that are or will motivate congregations to adjust to the new reality.
- Assist congregations in improving ability to provide streaming, etc. so that worship, meeting and other gatherings can continue to be accessed by folks inside and outside congregational membership. The pandemic gave opportunity to see that this can be done faithfully and effectively... we should learn from this.
- Help congregations to adjust to more members choosing online worship, especially as they are aging, and work to [help] these members stay engaged in God's Work.

### 4. More Training and Resources for All (63)

"Help congregations imagine ministries in new ways."

- Training for lay leaders particularly in the areas of leadership, evangelism, community development, preaching and worship practices.
- Resources online and in print.
- Grow a multimedia office.
- Provide resources that model how congregations can work together.
- Renew the Diakonia program.
- Provide more ways for clergy to build collegial relationships.

### 5. Help Congregations to Develop Shared Ministries (60)

"Encourage creativity and collaboration among and between congregations."

- Give direct and honest guidance on viability of congregations in trouble.
- Encourage congregations to work together and perhaps merge or create a parish with two or three congregations so focus can be on more than just survival.
- Create pathways for mergers. With dwindling attendance and budgets, we would be more effective in ministries and more faithful stewards of finances if we combined congregations.
- Establish system for measuring the viability of a congregation with attending action plans.

## What new steps should the synod take to equip lay and rostered leaders for serving over the next five years?



Provide training opportunities for laity to equip qualified individuals for better council leadership, preaching and leading worship. This could include convocations, workshops, classes at the seminary and mentoring.

SHORT RESPONSE QUESTIONS: 2A

### Provide learning opportunities and resources for rostered leaders on topics including:

- Opportunities for development of spiritual health and well being
- Support related to pay equity and finances

- Leadership skills
- Transition skills
- Family systems leadership for the modern church,
- Bible study
- Leading in a part-time congregation

- Social justice issues
- Technology
- New mission development
- Member engagement
- Improved mental health resources

SHORT RESPONSE QUESTIONS: 2B

Creating connections- between congregations, between congregations and the synod, among roster leaders, and with interfaith partners.

The purpose of these connections is for mutual support and to encourage working together in collaborations. This could be accomplished in a variety of ways including gathering leaders for listening times.



SHORT RESPONSE QUESTIONS: 2C

## Creation of innovative ideas and assistance with bi-vocational and multi-site ministries.

Suggested methods including creation of new ministry models, support via financial grants, training, clear vison, and better sharing of working collaborative models.

Instilling in them the confidence that we are called to serve using a wide variety of gifts and offering encouragement, training and affirmation of those gifts especially with such a critical shortage of Word and Sacrament ministers.

SHORT RESPONSE QUESTIONS: 2E

## How can the synod help members feel connected to each other and to the whole?

### **Encourage Interaction (158)**

"Each Church is led by a Council - but the councils have no connection with each other - Some mechanism, led by the local Conferences that enable Council connectivity would be extremely helpful."

- Synod/Church wide events, especially youth activities
- Provide opportunities for fellowship
- Synod ministry fair workshops
- Common interest clusters
- Pastor exchange
- More conference gatherings

### Fortify Connections (38)

"Do you mean feel connected or actually be connected?"

- Engage by identifying congregational needs, struggles
- Develop a strategy to elicit trust, be transparent
- Visit regularly, actively work with the congregations
- Call a bishop who can network
- Broadly hare the synod's vision for the future



SHORT RESPONSE QUESTIONS: 3B



### Common Purpose (35)

"Concentrate on what we have in common as Lutherans, and not differences between people."

- Encourage congregations to work together
- Create more opportunities for revival and service
- Mutual understanding
- Less politics, more love of one another
- Stress and support serving the wider community

### Foster Education (27)

"...Through synod-wide worship opportunities and educational workshops."

- Provide workshops, retreats, seminars, etc. for learning and fellowship
- Educate congregations on the relationship and importance of the synod



"Utilize retired lay people who have extensive experience in congregations to be listening ears, problem solvers, creative sparks for effective congregational ministry on all levels of church work. Retired does not mean leave them alone or they are no longer of value. Have the Bishop be the shepherd of rostered leaders and have a team of lay people who focus on needs of lay people. Focus on youth and young adult ministries to utilize their ministry in daily life and to coach those interested in getting into creative church work. The Bishop should not be traveling extensively away from the synod no matter how tempting or attractive that may be. Love the people in the synod and show that in as many ways as possible. Advocate for those who have skills and interested in ministry beyond the synod to serve in various capacities in the Conferences, ELCA, LWF, etc. This question is all about relationship building - letting people know you love them and are here with a listening ear and providing relevant feedback."

