

## 2010 Bishop Election Congregational Survey

Written Comments for Questions #5, #6, and #7

### Question #5

Please enter the information indicated below. You may choose more than one option.

*I am rostered clergy.*

*I am a rostered lay leader in my congregation.*

*I am a lay leader in my congregation.*

*I am on my church council.*

### Comments

- Have discussed these issues and our response with council and congregation often. Being from a small country congregation I pray whoever is elected bishop considers the situation of salary, etc. for a pastor and the church income. Perhaps look at part-time work outside of church for pastors. Most of us work 40 hours and do volunteer work at church, plus keep our homes going, also.
- Elder, SS teacher, Men's bible study leader
- A former church secretary for 18 yrs.
- A former Sunday school supt.
- composite list of 9 council members
- I am president of church Council.
- Also, planning for July 23-24, 2010, a Region 6 Women of ELCA Spiritual Gathering for Holiday Inn, Fairborn, Ohio -- all women are invited
- The members of the Church Council filled out the survey. The raw data was then taken and by the statistical application of ordered assigned numerical values to responses given, the top six responses were achieved.
- Ministry Coordinator (Staff) and member
- Have served on Christian Education and currently serve on Stewardship Committee. I also serve as lector and Assisting Minister for worship, sing in the choir, and have compiled the newsletter. Lifelong Lutheran in LCA tradition. Mom and sister are rostered clergy.
- At one time I was very active in my cong. but was gently sidelined mostly because of my aversion to our entertainment worship: rock and roll service which supposedly was to increase our numbers but instead broke us into two congregations.
- Called as Director of Pastoral Care/Chaplain at
- Ball Memorial Hospital, Muncie, IN
- retired
- I am an Intentional Interim Pastor, called by Synod Council, currently between assignments.
- These results are from our church council.
- I am retired, but was made Pastor Emeritus of Christ, Hammond.
- recently retired
- No comments

- Interim at Grace + Glory Lutheran, Goshen, KY
- My appointment is at Valparaiso University, not Christ Lutheran.
- On Leave from call
- At Trinity Lutheran Seminary in Columbus, Ohio.
- Diaconal ministry tract
- Served on many committees and Building Committee Chairman
- My wife and I are members of St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Vincennes, IN and have been Lay Delegate to the I-K Synod Assembly for several years.
- I am member of St. Matthew and an Associate in Ministry (Retired) in the Central/Southern Illinois Synod
- I am past president of the congregation and presently serve on our church council.
- Also, I have been on our church council for several years to include being president for 6 years
- Church treasurer
- I have served two terms on synod council; have been on Social Ministry, Conflict Resolution, presently on Nominating and Consultation Committees.
- Survey was compiled from results of congregational council discussion and rating
- Retired and volunteering for helping to start a congregation (preaching point) in Crown Point, IN
- I am a member of Trinity English Lutheran Church but do not speak for them or the leadership of the church.
- I am retired...but love and pray for the church daily.
- I am filling it out with input from the congregational council. We did the survey during a council meeting.
- See Question 1, above. I am completing this survey independently.

### **Question #6**

**From the list below, rank the following items in order of priority, with 1 being the most important of the gifts that you consider most important for the holder of the Office of the Bishop. Use the "Comment" box to list other items not on the list that you feel should be included.**

*Administration*

*Availability*

*Communications*

*Compassion/Listener*

*Discernment*

*Leadership/Spiritual Leadership*

*Pastoral Skills*

*Relate to all types of congregations and all levels of the church*

*Open-mindedness*

*Teacher/Preacher*

### **Comments**

- Keeping in touch, being available. Bishop Stuck has done this. Just pray it continues and considers the churches' needs.

- Being the widow of a pastor, I desire the bishop to be considerate of our needs. We need to be ministered to and not disregarded.
- When a congregation (small or large) has problems, e-mails and phone calls should not be ignored as if it's a "vocal minority."
- We need spiritual leadership to reverse the ELCA statement on sexuality. We should not follow the cultural pendulum; we need to bring people back to the Bible.
- Steward of time/resources/self-care/etc., mobile, faithful to Lutheran Doctrine, sense of humor, generous, self-defining, hospitable, flexible, interest in holding the office of bishop to the best of their ability.
- It is hard to rank these as they are all important. The bishop does not have an easy job!
- The need for all the above is great and, therefore, a bishop needs to have to a greater or lesser degree all of the above qualities.
- We need a bishop that can handle conflict, given the current climate of the ELCA after the churchwide assembly. We also need a bishop who can be a strong leader and hear voices of all of the individual congregations. We need a bishop who is first and foremost, emotionally healthy.
- All are important. But if a bishop has some of the top skills and can call good people to have gifts where he/she is lacking then I think life would be good.
- It has been our experience in past years that any communications we have sent to synod was summarily ignored. Only once and within the last year was there ever any response from synod.
- Selection of staff should be based on availability to pastors and congregations and for at least 15 years in parish ministry. This would augment availability, communications. The bishop needs to be a person of vision leadership.
- This was not an easy question to answer. All of these items are important. Although I rated pastoral skills #9, I do feel it is important for the bishop to be a quality speaker. Pastoral skills should be part of leadership.
- The bishop of the I-K Synod needs to be aware of the cultural and geographical differences of Kentucky.
- The bishop needs to return phone calls, answer mail and e-mail and be personally in touch with rostered servants. He or she must have strong administrative skills.
- FOLLOW THE SCRIPTURES IN THE BIBLE.
- I ranked pastoral skills as 10, but actually I see the skills I ranked as 1 thru 9 as pastoral skills. All of these skills are important. One person - one bishop - probably will not possess all skills in any varying degree. Leadership and communication skills are essential, in my opinion, to manage I-k congregations, rostered & non-rostered leaders, and members. Leadership and communication abilities are God's hands that can oversee the doing of God's work.
- May (s)he match the standards listed in I Timothy 3. A pastor who is available not so much for celebrations but walks with congregations as they pass thru the valleys of daily life in Christ & hit the streets of service.
- A bishop, in my view, has the primary vocation to be a pastor to the clergy and parishes of the synod

- I would rate Pastoral Skills, Preacher, Leadership/Spiritual Leadership and Compassion/Listener all at the same high level. I ranked them because one had to do so in the survey,
- Actually communications is very important!!!
- It is difficult to rank in numerical value traits for a bishop but my belief is that he/she must be firmly grounded in the faith first or all other traits will fail.
- The above ten items I consider to be all quite unimportant. THE most important gift a Bishop must have is the ability to distinguish between law and gospel and then, of course, the God-given gift to proclaim Christ!
- The synod and ELCA have difficulties and are in gradual decline. The synod needs a leader who recognizes the problems, communicates them in a constructive way to all members and congregations, listens to what the people say, propose action steps and implement programs agreed upon and supported by a majority. Adjust to the changing society, but maintain care and traditional Lutheran values and beliefs.
- Someone who supports the decision made by the national church regarding the human sexuality statement.
- He needs to be the shepherd, the KEY spiritual leader and moral mentor of his flock, and all that it implies.
- Preserver of biblical teachings.
- Although these are all useful and helpful.
- A bishop with pastoral skills and is available are all that is needed. Pastoral skill without availability because of administration tasks is a waste of skill.
- Spirituality for his/her personal and devotional life a priority.
- Again, the distance between one and ten is miniscule. All are relatively equal in importance.
- Bishops have always, in church history, been primarily teachers of the faith, not administrators. Do you think St. Augustine ever sat on a committee? That's what the bishops' assistants are for.
- The most important role of the synod office is to support both congregations and candidates through the call process. Bishops must not tolerate discrimination on the basis of race or sex in the call process by congregations or synod staff members. The synod needs to support, and when necessary, challenge congregations and pastors considering a call. I also expect the bishop to aid congregations in crisis by returning phone calls and reaching out to congregants and pastoral staff.
- The new bishop should relate to all size congregations and especially smaller ones who are struggling to stay alive and who really don't want to fold, but to grow again....How is the question.
- Theological acumen would be a good asset.
- I think the administration function of the office could be better addressed with someone other than the bishop.
- Tough to rank order. Several characteristics are overlapping. A likert (?) scale probably would be a better representation of this question. But we need a great

- communicator, listener, and orator. I would also look for somebody with experience in our colleges and universities and who can relate to Generation X.
- We need to be much more proactive in the communities--evangelizing in other "non-traditional" ways. As an example how about the synod hosting a sprint triathlon at each of our wonderful camps
  - Others in the synod can assist the bishop with communications and administration if these are not the bishop's gifts.
  - Most of these really ought to be possessed to a marked degree. The call demands someone with an unusual combination of skills.
  - The upcoming years are likely to be tumultuous times for the Church. It will be a challenge to affirm people from all perspectives and help them understand how we can all continue to be one body. Personal skills such as integrity, honesty, and some real inventive thinking :) will be essential.
  - I think that the bishop also needs to be aware of what is going on in the seminaries and be in contact with first call candidates that have been assigned to the I-K synod.
  - The bishop needs to be pastor to the pastors, to advocate for pastors as much as possible.
  - Theological grounding and study.
  - I find much overlap on this list, which undermines its effectiveness. For instance, compassion and listening skills are central to pastoral skills- as I understand them.
  - HE should be a discerning gentle giant who prayerfully wields a velvet hammer.
  - I would like to see some kind of characteristic that had to do with the bishop having common sense and being in touch with the real world.
  - Tough to prioritize as all are important
  - A person who is not afraid to express his or her convictions. Someone with orthodox Lutheran theology and ecclesiology.
  - Above all, we must seek in a bishop a pastor who has the highest integrity and honesty. A pastor to pastors and congregations who has the love of Jesus Christ within his or her heart and stands on the Holy Scriptures as the pathway to life and salvation.
  - Always needed, but now more than ever, we need a bishop who is a healer who can lead us to fix our eyes on the One who heals all.

### **Question #7**

**Thoughtfully consider each issue in the list below and rank each one numerically, with 1 being of the highest priority. Use the "Comment" box to list other issues not on the list that you feel should be included.**

*Communication with congregations*

*Declining church membership/attendance*

*Focus on core values, mission, vision of the Indiana-Kentucky Synod*

*Human sexuality/potential for divisiveness*

*Outreach/Growing Churches*

*Pastoral Support*

*Pastoral vacancies/shortage of ordained ministers*

## *Stewardship*

### *Support for small, struggling or troubled congregations*

#### Comments

- We feel that the structure of pastors' salary, etc. should be reevaluated. Not many people coming out of college (teachers-communication, etc.) are debt free! But pastors get a decent salary...all expenses and housing. That would be a great deal, but considering most salaries frozen and benefits cut. The church income is DOWN. Perhaps pastors need to do as we folks do. Pay part of their expenses.
- Concerning human sexuality, I did not approve of the churchwide's decision on this issue. It bothered me, but as a Christian, we are to love all people, regardless of their issues. I would just as soon drop this issue and let's move on.
- Please avoid changes that alienate the majority of members based on human sexuality
- Stewardship is rated high....in the sense of ALL gifts and encouraging & empowering pew people to use them.
- It saddens me to have to put human sexuality so high on this list as there seem to be so many more important issues in the world, but I realize its current divisiveness makes it a priority.
- I really only wanted to rank the top 4. After that the items aren't really on my list.
- I realize these responses are rudimentary because it seems to me we have had a very distant relationship with the bishop except in the case of a problem pastor and I mean a really problem pastor.
- Again the assistants to the bishop can help with communication with congregations.
- It is a known fact that 65% of all denominations churches are small churches. Instead of seeing them as failed ministries, which is the tendency, why not see them as an asset? Not all small congregations are struggling or troubled.
- We have spent too much time on the human sexuality issue. We are all God's creation and it should not be our desire to exclude any part of God's creation. Leave the judgment to God.
- Less time spent at churchwide and more time spent in the congregations with pastors and laity.
- Being bishop is a big job!
- Communication with all members is most important. We need to see that we are members of the larger church body.
- 2. Stewardship is a lifestyle, not a tithe or benevolence.
- 9. Potential for divisiveness should not be the responsibility of synod bishops. They should focus 3 to 8. These items are centered on the Great Commission. Let's permit the development of procedures and processes to egress from churchwide and its agents.
- With so many small congregations we need a game plan to help them not just keep the doors open but serve faithfully. The bishop needs to be a matchmaker knowing the congregations intimately and professional leaders very well, so that no vacancies are so long that they threaten the vitality of the congregation. Pastoral care & good communication are essential for passion & hope to be

embodied in the people. We do share in the ministry of the synod but the bishop sets the tone & direction.

- I would encourage the synod not to limit its search for a candidate to clergy and staff in the Indiana/Kentucky Synod alone. It is not unheard of to find qualified candidates outside one's own geographic area.
- Again, the first five are really about even in priority.  
Even though I am committed to the mission of the ELCA, I am greatly concerned about the unity of the church given the Minneapolis decision on human sexuality. I think also that pastoral support for small congregations and declining membership / attendance is high on the list as well.
- I am rejoicing in the ELCA vote and feel it is time to move on to REAL ministry!
- These are all important, it is difficult to rank and I would look for opportunities whenever they are found.
- I think the position of bishop should make it a priority to turn the face of the Church to the poor and serve the poor frequently not just on holidays. I think he/she should reach out to Latinos more and speak Spanish.
- I have probably placed human sexuality/potential for divisiveness too high. However, if we are still struggling in one year with this issue to the degree we are currently, it will be of great importance to have a bishop willing and able to lead us in reconnecting, rebuilding and possibly even reorganizing.
- It is the "job" of the church to preach the gospel. Can we please leave the "job" of making good coffee to the Rotary Clubs etc. and focus on spreading God's kingdom? If we do not preach the good news, who will?
- The recent statement on sexuality goes against Lutheran and Christian beliefs and practices held for hundreds of years. It is divisive and will speed the decline of the synod and ELCA. Partial or complete separation of the different beliefs is the only way to stop divisiveness and decline even if this means the end of the ELCA and the synod as we know it today. God is eternal. The synod and ELCA are man made and temporal.
- The place scripture, tradition and confessions are placed in our discernment
- I would rank 6-8 as all of a piece and at the same level of importance knowing that as even the smallest member of the body is not honored and made to feel welcome, the whole body suffers.
- I am amazed that with so many retired pastors and married pastors without a call such as I have been that there are any shortages. The synods do not use the people in their area and in my case have been ostracized. The potential for divisiveness concerning human sexuality is the inability for liberals and homosexuals to reach a theological determination that according to scripture homosexuality is a sin which is in need of confession, absolution and trust in the means of grace.
- Along with communication with congregations is "visibility". Preaching at congregational anniversaries, ordinations/installations, and other special events a must.
- These should be considered the "TOP NINE" with nearly equal importance. There are many other concerns for the synod. UNITY in spirit despite differences, mutual support, inter-communication between churches and conferences

- While the development and implementation of programs is important, such projects should not distract from the synod's role in vacancy issues and communication with rostered leaders. Further, our synod needs unity. This is not the time for a bishop to push their personal agendas related to sexuality or any other political issue. We need a bishop with the ability to bring together divided peoples and focus us on the mission of Christ.
- Divisiveness in our church is rapidly escalating, and will be a huge issue in the years to come.
- These are truly "forced choices", all are important.
- I think our new bishop will need to focus on the divisiveness of our congregations with regard to the human sexuality question, and to consider the congregation's feelings who are trying to remain with the true Bible teachings of right and wrong. It will be difficult.
- In "Outreach/Growing Churches," is "Growing an adjective or a verb? Focus on churches that grow, or on helping congregations to grow?"
- Communication will be essential. A bishop that will be able to bring and energize youth and bridge the divisiveness in our clergy ranks. A person with skills in restructuring, reorganizing and improving efficiencies in the synod is needed. Also, I would investigate looking into "reverse engineering" of congregations. Why not look into the successful congregations and attempt to put together the commonalities these congregations have.
- Mission is core!
- By #1 I mean helping to revitalize the proclamation of the Gospel.
- We need someone who will lovingly but actively encourage small congregations to merge.
- Declining church membership/attendance and the divisions resulting from the human sexuality decision are undoubtedly linked although membership/attendance was declining earlier as well. Our next bishop will have perhaps the greatest challenge since inception of the ELCA trying to help keep the ELCA together. Thank you for allowing us this input.
- Mission start congregations, issues of justice and the call to be public church would be my # 1. There are items on this list that, given the option, I would not include or would articulate differently.
- The bishop's life must be grounded in scripture. He must be firm, but a gentle, open administrator who knows from the first that the rift must be healed. New strategies for attrition and growth must be implemented. In communicating with congregations he must let them know that he knows well their situation and is attempting to aid in finding a solution. Supporting pastors and filling vacancies is of great importance. Emphasis on stewardship must receive much attention.
- Before doing the survey, several members of congregational council asked questions about what the job of the bishop was. This demonstrated a real lack of understanding about the synod level of our church. These questions came from the local church leadership.
- Consider aligning entire synod with Lutheran CORE or at least make synod policy that would maintain the standards in Vision and Expectations for the moral

behavior of clergy. Also prohibit any public recognition of same sex unions in I-K synod churches.

- Included in the core values, mission, and vision of the synod for me is the ability to communicate the Gospel of Jesus Christ with power and passion: to embody this Gospel to the world (in the bishop's role as public face of the ELCA/Synod); to bring Jesus' transforming mercy to struggling AND growing congregations; and to provide a Lutheran grace-centered perspective to the often so divisive conversations on sexuality or other topics. Skill in truly embodying the Gospel unites everything else.
- All of the above issues are important and a new bishop will have to respond to all of them in due time. Yet, I am afraid that the human sexuality issue that was adopted at our August National Convention will take up a great deal of time when the new bishop takes office. The fallout from the bitterness and distrust for the office of the bishop over the issue will be the defining mark of the new bishop for most of his first term. He or she must show the love of Christ and be a healer and leader.
- There is a need for one who casts a vision of what it means to be a Christ person and how that is lived in a Christian community. If this is done, many will follow and fill the other needs of the church
- I understand the human sexuality issue may overwhelm these other issues - but it should not. Working with pastors and congregations is key since it has been a major deficiency in the current bishop's office.