

Calling a Bishop for the NE Synod

Introduction / Purpose

Congratulations on being a Synod Assembly voting member to the 2018 NE Synod Assembly on May 31, June 1-2, 2018. Your presence at an assembly is very important but this assembly is particularly special. Along with conducting the annual business of the Nebraska Synod, we will be calling a Bishop for the Nebraska Synod. We encourage you to be in prayerful discernment as you prepare to ballot for this important calling of the Nebraska Synod Bishop.

The purpose of this communication is to provide you with the Bishop's election procedures that will be followed at the assembly. This information is very important for you to know and understand prior to the Bishop balloting. Please study this information carefully.

These procedures address the Bishop balloting ONLY and do not necessarily relate to the balloting for other synod positions that will occur during the assembly.

Who will Conduct the Bishop's Election?

We are pleased to have ELCA Vice President Bill Horne, with us at the 2018 Nebraska Synod Assembly. During the specific times in the assembly agenda where Bishop's balloting occurs, ELCA VP Horne will preside over the assembly.

Who can Cast a Ballot during the Bishop's Election?

All registered and credentialed voting members to the assembly are eligible to participate in the balloting for Bishop.

During the balloting process, it is critical that the number of ballots cast do not exceed the number of registered and credentialed voting members at the assembly at the time of the balloting. If this occurs, balloting will be declared invalid and a re-ballot must be taken. To ensure an accurate and fair ballot, assembly registration will be suspended for a time period prior to each Bishop's ballot. Check the assembly agenda for these important cutoff times.

Make sure your registration is completed promptly when you arrive at the assembly to avoid issues during the Bishop's balloting.

*During the Bishop's balloting, ONLY registered and credentialed voting members will be allowed in the assembly voting member area. If you are expecting to vote during the Bishop's balloting, **you must have completed your assembly registration in a timely manner and have proper credentials and be seated in the assembly voting member area.** First bishop ballots will be included with the voting member registration packets for those that register prior to the cut-off time. Subsequent bishop ballots will be distributed and collected as necessary.*

The Ballot and Your Vote; Don't Spoil Your Ballot

During the Bishop's balloting there will be one ballot per voting member seated in the voting member area. To be a valid ballot, there must be only one nominee voted for on each ballot.

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If more than one nominee is indicated on a ballot, that ballot will be considered spoiled and will be excluded from the ballot counting.

The opportunity to nominate a rostered ELCA Minister of Word and Sacrament (pastor) who is not already on the ballot will be provided on the first Bishop's ballot. See below for additional ballot procedures. Writing in a pastor as a nomination will be considered as a vote. A ballot with a pastor's name written in AND containing a mark for another nominee on the same ballot will be considered as a spoiled ballot and will be excluded for ballot counting.

Vote for only one nominee per ballot.

Writing in a pastor's name on a valid first ballot, will be considered a vote for that nominee.

First bishop ballots will be included with the voting member registration packets for those that register prior to the cut-off time.

The Bishop's Nomination Process

In February 2018, all mission clusters (clusters) within the Nebraska Synod met to nominate candidates for Bishop. All cluster nominees were contacted and asked to discern their desire to remain as a nominee for Bishop. The first ballot for Bishop (see below for details) will include those pastors nominated from the clusters and have consented to have their name put forward as a nominee for Bishop.

The first Bishop ballot will also include an opportunity for writing in a pastor as a nominee. All written in nominees from the first Bishop's ballot will be contacted prior to the second ballot and asked to discern their desire to remain as a nominee for Bishop.

A ballot with a written in nominee and a mark for a cluster nominee will be considered as two votes on one ballot and will be a spoiled ballot and excluded from the ballot counting.

See procedures below for subsequent Bishop ballots.

Note: If you nominated a pastor but you do not see their name on a Bishop's ballot, that nominee has discerned to not have their name brought forward to the Bishop's ballot.

The Balloting Process

Voting members and visitors will be given an opportunity to meet the nominees for Bishop during a "meet and greet" period on Thursday, May 31, at 6:30 PM at the Younes Conference Center, Kearney. These nominees will be invited to briefly speak to those in attendance, sharing briefly their answers to two pre-determined questions. No questions will be taken from the audience. Appetizers will be served at this event. Nominees for other positions to be voted on by the Synod Assembly are also invited to be present at the "meet and greet", but they will not be speaking.

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The Bishop shall be selected by the Synod Assembly utilizing a pre-nomination (cluster), ecclesiastical ballot. This process is defined in the synod constitution. A brief outline of this process is provided below.

The first ballot at the Synod Assembly shall include the names of pastors who consented to having their names placed on the ballot following their nomination at the February mission cluster unit meetings. The names of other ELCA Ministers of Word and Sacrament may be written in on the first ballot. If a nominee receives three-fourths of the legal votes cast on the first ballot, he or she shall be deemed elected as Bishop.

If a second ballot is necessary, the names of the nominees who received at least one vote on the first ballot and have not chosen to withdraw from consideration shall appear on the second ballot. If a nominee receives three-fourths of the legal votes cast on the second ballot, he or she shall be deemed elected as Bishop.

If a third ballot is necessary, the third ballot will be limited to the seven nominees (plus ties) who received the greatest number of legal votes on the second ballot. Biographical data for the nominees on the third ballot shall be printed and distributed to the delegates prior to the third ballot. If a nominee receives two-thirds of the legal votes cast on the third ballot, he or she shall be deemed elected as Bishop.

If no nominee receives the necessary two-thirds vote on the third ballot, the three nominees receiving the highest number of votes (plus ties) on the third ballot shall be invited to address the Assembly. After nominees have addressed the Assembly, a fourth ballot shall be taken. If a nominee receives sixty percent of the legal votes on the fourth ballot, he or she shall be deemed elected as Bishop.

If necessary, the fifth ballot shall be limited to the two nominees (plus ties) who received the greatest number of legal votes on the fourth ballot. On the fifth ballot, a simple majority of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election as Bishop.

A Role for Everyone

There is a key role for everyone in the Nebraska Synod to play in the selection and calling of the next Bishop.

We ask that everyone in all the Nebraska Synod congregations be in prayer, listening and discerning how God may be leading us to be the church together in the months and years ahead.

Conclusion

If you have questions about the process for calling a Bishop for the Nebraska Synod, please contact the synod office.

Nebraska Synod Bishop Election Task Force
Pat Gregory, Chair

Calling a Bishop for the NE Synod



Name: Rev. Dr. Sarah R. Cordray

Ordination Date: July 10, 2005

Education and Earned Degrees:

Doctor of Ministry in Congregational Mission and Leadership, Luther Seminary, 2017

Master of Divinity, Wartburg Seminary, 2005
Bachelor of Arts, Elementary Education major, Luther College, 1993

Current and Previous Positions Held:

Senior Pastor, Luther Memorial Lutheran Church, Syracuse, NE, 2014-Current

Head of Staff, Tri-County Lutheran Parish (four congregations), Chappell, Lodgepole, and Oshkosh, NE, 2009-2014

Associate Pastor, First Lutheran Church, Aitkin, MN, 2005-2009
Director of Youth Ministries, Hope Lutheran Church, Fresno, CA, 1996-2001

Why do you wish to be considered for the office of Bishop?

I have been blessed to hear in these last few years an external call through many voices to consider the office of Bishop. God continues to guide me in discernment in the internal call for this office, as I am open to the Spirit's movement. I have great respect for our current Bishop, and have been blessed to work with him and many of the synod staff through Synod Council, the Synod Visioning process, and other opportunities. I also have been extremely blessed to work with a variety of congregations who have reimagined themselves through God-sized dreams, their mission, vision, and adaptive changes. Both of these experiences at the congregational and synodical levels have allowed me to walk with others as they have discerned what God is up to and how God asks them to partner together in God's mission. With these experiences, it is an honor and a joy to serve in the call of pastor and be considered for the office of Bishop. Also, through the gift of the nomination from others in this process, I am grateful to bring a woman's voice to the election.

How do you see God at work in your life?

I may not have talked until I was three, but I surely walked myself to church at that age. From early on, Jesus has led me showing signs to guide and direct me. When I worried about my first job search, I asked God to give me a sign that this was in God's hands. The next day my future principal called me. When I wondered if I would marry, God answered me through an anonymous prayer card with Psalm 37:4, "Take delight in the Lord and he will give you the desires in your heart." When I prayed for children, I dreamt of a little brunette girl. I looked up the name Samantha the next day, which means, "Told by God." Now, I have a ten-year-old daughter named Samantha, as well as my twelve-year-old son Nathaniel. When I told God I could not afford seminary, I received a call the next day from Wartburg telling me that I was awarded a full tuition scholarship. When I wonder today where God leads us as a congregation, God provides disciples to discern and learn God's guidance and vision for us. In thanksgiving to God, I continue to listen, trust, and follow.

What is your vision for the ministry of the Nebraska Synod?

"*Hope, Connect, Go!*" is our current synod's vision. Because I have been a part of it from its origin to now on its various committees, I embrace this vision. *Hope* is the anchor of our faith, especially during cultural changes and societal shifts where church is no longer the center. *Hope* reminds us that our identity and purpose is given in grace alone, through faith alone, by Christ alone. *Connect* reminds us that through Jesus' life given on the cross, we are connected to God and one another forever. By being the unique church we are and using what God has gifted in what we have, we are called to re-member ourselves as the body of Christ. *Go* reminds us of Jesus' call to go and make disciples. Yet in this age, *go* also means discernment, by asking what God is up to in our communities, our state, and our world, and asking how we are to partner with God. Whereas I believe we Lutherans easily embrace the call to *Go*, I challenge us to move from our persistent shyness to tell the story—God's story and ours—as we encourage one another to keep *hope* and become more *connected*.

What do you see as the principal opportunities and challenges for this synod's bishop in the next six years?

The two principal challenges for this synod's bishop in the next six years include decreased resources of rostered leaders and finances and a highly individualized and divided society. The first challenge is the shortage of rostered leaders for the number of vacancies. This challenge becomes opportunity to form parishes with full communion congregations, grow the Parish Ministry Associate program, and embolden congregations to pray for and intentionally raise up leaders. Decreased finances continue as our agricultural economy struggles. Opportunity comes as we reclaim stewardship as a spiritual practice, and faithfully speak about money as our response of thanksgiving. The second challenge of our highly individualized and divided society brings a growing tolerance of uncivil behavior and raised anxiety amongst congregations. Opportunity comes to reclaim our identity as the body of Christ, members joined together, as well as our purpose to love God and love neighbor. Opportunity also comes for us to more boldly proclaim a gospel that does not separate us into either/or categories, but into a life of both/and—both saint and sinner, both good and fallen, both law and gospel given through our Savior who is both human and divine, while being both for us and with us.

What gifts would you bring to the office of bishop of this synod?

The gifts I bring include: a skill set and experience in leading congregations through adaptive changes; visionary leadership gifts to assist others in discerning and defining their mission and vision in relation to their biblical foundation; a wide variety of experience from small-rural congregations to a corporate-sized congregation; experience and leadership in the local ministerial, synodical, and Churchwide levels; significant teamwork to create a balanced congregational budget with creative, innovative means; community building skills; and, patience and persistence that God uses even the small to make great changes especially in the uncertainty of today's world.

Today's church is called to make adaptive changes on a frontier of which we do not know what it looks like before us into the future. Leadership skills need to shift significantly from methods of the past to experimenting and discerning along the way. Today's bishop is one that inspires on the edge of the frontier, while still getting down in the depths of local life to accompany alongside. I pray for God's empowerment to share the gospel of Jesus Christ so that I may inspire and walk alongside God's people as we journey together.

Calling a Bishop for the NE Synod



Name: Pastor Inba Joshua Inbarasu

Ordination Date: June 12, 1991

Education and Earned Degree:

Doctor of Ministry degree in Religion and Health, D.Min. 2007 Chicago Theological Seminary

Master of Theology degree, specialized in Missiology, M.Th. 1991 SAIACS.

Master of Arts degree in Public Administration, M.A. 1989
Sri Venkateswara University

Master of Arts degree in Philosophy, M.A. 1986 Osmania University

Bachelor of Divinity, B.D. 1984 Serampore College

Bachelor of Theology, B.Th. 1983 Serampore College

Previous positions held:

Pastor, Asian Indian congregations in Chicago – Part time 1998-2002
Missionary work in North and South India – 1981

Medical Mission Work in Tanzania, Africa - 2008

Senior Chaplain for the Medical College and Hospital (CMCH), Vellore, India -1988-1998

Theological Seminary Faculty, Hindustan Bible Institute (HBI) in Chennai, India – 1984-1986

Chaplain and CPE Supervisor/Educator, Chicago 1998-2002 Des Moines 2002-2008 and Omaha 2008-2017

Interim Pastoral Care Director, St. Matthews Home, Park Ridge, IL 1999

Visitation and Pastoral Support, Grace Lutheran Church Congregation, Des Moines, IA 2004

Certified Educator/Clinical Chaplain, Central Alabama Veteran Health Care System – 2017-present

Visitation Pastor, Kountze Memorial Lutheran Church, Omaha (Part time) – 2013-present

Why do you wish to be considered for the office of Bishop?

Pastoral care is at the heart of my ministry, and I am passionate in providing pastoral care, and in turn, inspiring and empowering others to provide pastoral care as well. As the primary mission of the office of the Bishop is to shepherd and resource rostered ministers and congregations to proclaim and embody Christ to the world, I consider this to be sacred opportunity to serve. The functions of the shepherd are caring, tending, reconciling, sustaining, leading and guiding, and they inspire me to this office. I wish to strengthen the unity of the Church through leadership, preaching, teaching and administering of Word, Sacrament and Service. I strongly believe in the abundance and providence of God's grace and mercy to our needs. I have been blessed by God's gifts all through my life and would like to share the blessings through connecting, inspiring, translating and shepherding the needs of the synod's mission and ministry resources. In our synod cluster gathering, as my name is prayerfully brought forth for this nomination, I would like to be open and obedient to the leading of the Holy Spirit to the sacred calling for this office.

How do you see God at work in your life?

Even before I was aware of it, God was at work in my life. I was baptized in a small, rural congregation—Arcot Lutheran Church in South India. God was at work through Danish Missionary Society (DMS), who brought the Gospel to our community, as they established hospitals, educational institutions and churches. My grandparents and parents were blessed by God's grace and love. They nurtured me and faithfully brought me to the Church to experience God's love and grace from the beginning of my life.

My mother's sudden death in an accident when I was two impacted my life. I could experience that God was at work through my father in my life. He brought me regularly, along with my siblings, to church and to my mother's tomb to pray. Through my Father's eyes, I saw God at work instilling in me to put trust in God who walks with us in our struggle and in our joy. God was at work through my father as he put these words on my mother's tombstone: "Surely goodness and mercy follow me all the days of my life; and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever." (Ps.23:6).

What is your vision for the ministry of the Nebraska Synod?

In the Nebraska Synod, we are people of God who believe and confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and the Gospel as the power of God for the salvation of all who believe. In our synod's core values, we share that we are a church whose unity is in Jesus Christ, who gathers us around word and water, wine and bread. We are deeply rooted yet changing and always being made new. It is my prayer that the Holy Spirit continue to do God's work in us and through us. I would seek this call to continue the opportunity to build on the momentum of our strategic vision to hope, connect and go.

I will vision together to seek, explore, collaborate, capitalize synergy, and wisdom to become all that God wants us to be as Nebraska Synod in this 21st century. It is my personal prayer for us and as God's word says, "Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that is at work in us, To Him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and forever, Amen." (Eph.3:20-21).

What do you see as the principal opportunities and challenge for this synod's bishop in the next six years?

I see many opportunities for this synod's bishop in the next six years. As a Church, we are deeply rooted in Jesus Christ our Lord. Generations of God's faithful people built this synod on this firm foundation. To stand on those broad shoulders and build it further is a great opportunity and privilege for this coming six years and beyond.

Seeing the ways God has blessed our members, watching the joy of our members serving, responding to the global needs of others, and enhancing the mission of the church is something to behold, but it is also an opportunity for the next bishop. Though the synod's congregations are spread throughout the state, we reside in one state as Nebraska. It is a great opportunity to be the agents of hope.

Some of our national challenges like the decline in church membership, aging congregations, and decrease in giving will likely continue in the next six years, but they are also an opportunity for innovation and creativity. These challenges can evoke in us the hope in our crucified and risen Christ who has been "God our help in the ages past is still our hope for years to come."

What gifts would you bring to the office of bishop of this synod?

I bring the following gifts, with which God has blessed me, to the office of bishop of this synod: the gift of a pastor's heart; theologically reflective mind; soul's desire to serve; obedience to the guidance of the Holy Spirit; attentive listening; compassion; passion for the Gospel; empathy; an ability to engage and accompany in difficult conversations to help people identify the issues and seek solutions; perseverance; positive attitude; sense of humor; imagination; curiosity; and a desire to minister to people and churches to be and to become all that God wants them to be. Trusting in God's faithfulness and amazing grace, I am willing to take risks and am open to learning. I embrace diversity and differences to work together for common purposes and for the sake of our ministry and witness. Having worked in different cultures, congregations and institutions, I bring varied experience and a global perspective. My faith in God's marvelous power helps me to see beyond the problem and possibilities. I believe in the promise of the scripture: "To them God has chosen to make known among the gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery—which is Christ in you, the hope of Glory." (Col.1:27).

Calling a Bishop for the NE Synod



Name: Brian Maas

Ordination Date: July 26, 1992

Education and Earned Degrees:

Nebraska Wesleyan University, B.A. 1986

Yale Divinity School, M.Div. 1989

Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg,

Certificate of Studies (Lutheran Year) 1992

Previous Positions Held:

Pastor, Emmanuel Lutheran, Tekamah Nebraska 1992-97

Pastor, Immanuel Lutheran, Kansas City Missouri 1997-2006

Pastor, First Lutheran, Lincoln Nebraska 2006-12

Why do you wish to be considered for the office of Bishop?

I believe the Spirit calls us to vocation, to roles and to positions. I feel my time in this office has been a call, and I am open to the Spirit's call to another term--or to something else, if that's the Spirit's will. If the call is to continue in this office, I am encouraged by the differences between beginning a first term and beginning a second one. There won't be the steep and lengthy learning curve to repeat; there is an excellent staff team in place; I am much more familiar with the congregations, ministries and members of the synod; and while every day in this role is different, I now have a sense of its rhythm and demands. Whether the Spirit's call is to a second term or to something else, it will be an adventure.

How do you see God at work in your life?

I see God in every element of life, from the gift of each new day, to the relationships I'm blessed to be part of, to the call and encouragement that undergird this ministry. As a husband and father, I see God in Debbie and the kids as they fulfill their vocations, share their gifts and practice love and grace with me and with others. I see God in the staff I work with as their many and varied God-given gifts come together to serve faithfully and creatively. I see God throughout the Nebraska Synod in its manifold life-transforming ministries and faithful members--God is up to something here! In particular I perceive God at work when I'm in prayer, as God tries patiently and persistently through the silence of contemplation to guide and correct and encourage me in my life and ministry.

What is your vision for the ministry of the Nebraska Synod?

One person's vision isn't adequate for a ministry this broad, deep and strong. I rely on what the Spirit has raised up through the Strategic Vision we're currently living through. I believe it has helped us grow and focus, and continues to do so. We've all been accountable to it and have benefited from its flexibility as the church and the world continue to change.

That said, the personal vision that drives my work is of a synod filled with people who know, live and tell stories: of the Gospel, of their own faith, and of the congregation and larger church through which each of them is partnering with God to transform the world.

In the words of the Strategic Vision, I see individuals rooted in the *Hope* of the Gospel, *Connected* to God and one another in community, eager to *Go* through the many expressions of ministry that make up this synod—and willing and able to tell others about all of it.

What do you see as the principal opportunities and challenges for this synod's bishop in the next six years?

The challenges will be largely the same as those faced by most congregations—decreasing financial support, declining membership and participation, changing demographics, rapidly shifting cultural norms and a shortage of rostered leaders to meet the need.

The opportunities are nonetheless abundant. People are abandoning institutions, but not the Gospel. People long for what we have—hope, community, welcome, grace, purpose, impact. The opportunity is learning how to *share* those things with our neighbors. Transformative faith formation and deepening spirituality are possible, and we know how to do it. Our Serving Arms continue to grow and thrive, and are willing to connect more deeply with our congregations. We are only beginning to grow our ability to adapt to changing giving patterns and inspire support for mission. We have outstanding members waiting to be recognized and invited into leadership in their congregations and in service to the church.

Our opportunities outweigh our challenges. Our continuing task is to proclaim real hope in a culture of manufactured fear.

What gifts would you bring to the office of bishop of this synod?

I have much yet to learn and many areas in which to grow, but I bring six years' experience in the office. I have also gained a broad and deep knowledge of and appreciation for the many diverse members, ministries, gifts and expressions of the Nebraska Synod. And I have an awareness of the great privilege it is to serve in this office, and deep gratitude for the gift of the last six years.

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Name: Bill Schroeder

Ordination Date: January 14, 1996

Education and Earned Degrees:

Bachelor of Science in Management & Accounting; Master of Divinity

Previous Positions Held:

Senior Pastor, Pastor, Interim (*Transitional*) Pastor; Associate Pastor, Spiritual Counselor/Life Coach, Chef/Owner, Public Relations, Computer Programmer Analyst, and the U.S. Navy. I've served the church from the West Coast to the Mid-West; in rural, suburban, metropolitan congregations and various multi-cultural contexts; from memberships of 150 to 2,500.

Why do you wish to be considered for the office of Bishop?

At the Bishop Nomination Conference gathering I was surprised that my name came forward as a candidate. I am relatively new to the Nebraska Synod. I was not seeking or even considering the idea. Since that gathering I have been seeking the Spirit's guidance as to whether I should remain a candidate. I have prayed a great deal, spent quiet times of solitude reflecting and asking my colleagues, parishioners, friends and family their insights. I strongly believe in the moving of the Spirit and I have faith that my name was brought forward for a reason. Therefore, I trust that God has a greater plan on my moving forward as a candidate than I can humanly rationalize.

How do you see God at work in your life?

Faith and the church are important parts of my life's journey. I've not always immediately recognized the countless times when God was working in and through me. However, after some time of reflection, I've noticed God's nurturing hand. At thirteen I stepped between my mother pointing a pistol at my step-father. God gave me the courage to talk my parents down.

My son was born with Tetralogy of Fallot and needed open heart surgery at 14 months. God gave me the faith and strength to trust in God's love and mercy. My spouse and I have walked together through 17+ of her surgeries and numerous hospitalizations. God provided a sense of peace and calm that we couldn't have mustered up ourselves. With the Holy Spirit, I believe God continues to guide and strengthen me through life's events, the awesome wonders of creation and the people placed in my path. One such relationship exemplifies the Lord working in my life. My childhood pastor and spouse encouraged and challenged me to answer God's call at a young age. To step out of my comfort zone, to trust and embrace the unknown in faith. Today they're one of my primary human spiritual resources.

What is your vision for the ministry of the Nebraska Synod?

First, my vision includes providing continuous encouragement and support to the awe-inspiring ministries we already embrace. Secondly, to facilitate the dedication of necessary resources to assist such ministries toward growth both spiritually and physically. It is important to me that the leaders of our church provide continuity, support and visibility to congregational members, our churches and lay and rostered leaders. As bishop, I would make it a top priority to be visible and available to every congregation and its leaders. In addition to Synod Assembly, my goal is to have worship and fellowship events a minimum of twice a year throughout the synod.

We are a vast synod geographically with a diversity of church contexts. My vision is that as a synod we would passionately seek opportunities that unite and uplift the many resources of our congregations and leaders in a way that maximizes the effectiveness and impact of our ministry together. I envision our synod boldly exploring innovative ways to renew and revitalize congregations and ministry. I would endeavor to bring together the giftedness of our lay and rostered leaders to work collaboratively with one another in supporting and assisting congregations with areas of need.

What do you see as the principal opportunities and challenges for this synod's bishop in the next six years?

I have observed and witnessed that many times our greatest challenges can be our greatest opportunities. With our variety of church contexts comes great complexity, but it also means we have a rich variety of resources and giftedness. Our opportunity is in the selfless sharing of those rich God-given resources by forming specialized teams to be available to our congregations in their areas of need.

A couple major challenges are our ever-changing culture and the influence of multi-media/technology which tends to pull us away from our most important of relationships, God and family. On the flip side, one innovative idea might be to organize our own synodical soccer or volley ball leagues, gymnastics or dance clubs that would not compete on Sundays and had a Biblical base. We would uplift and honor God and family while still having fun.

We could take advantage of technology in a way that addresses the rostered leader shortage by using live-streaming of sermons, educational opportunities or even complete worship services. This would be an effective use of resources and cost effective. It could also reach out to a wider audience that might not otherwise hear the Good News.

What gifts would you bring to the office of bishop of this synod?

- God is my number one priority!
- Sense of vision that looks beyond the present, is innovative, with faith and courage to take the steps necessary to get there. Patience and resilience. Mission minded.
- Provide clarity and leadership when confusion, doubt and chaos may overwhelm others. Able to ask the tough questions, when necessary.
- Active listener – *I listen more, talk less.*
- Visibility – *Building relationships is critical to me.*
- Compassion – *Caring, present, non-judgmental, can put myself in someone else's shoes.*
- Good sense of humor – *Although not a comedian.*
- Passion – *Energetically embrace what I believe in. Excited about the future of the Nebraska Synod.*
- Balance/Boundaries – *Intentional healthy balance between professional and personal life. Values confidentiality and sacred space.*
- Collegial – *Working together, supporting and sharing is paramount.*
- Self-Awareness – *I'm not afraid to ask for help or seek advice.*
- Humble – *Willingness to graciously accept criticism.*
- Discernment – *Lots of Prayer, quiet reflection and Scriptural exploration.*
- Learning – *Continual Biblical, professional and personal study.*
- Daily Sabbath Time – *Prayer and devotion.*
- Encourager – *Recognizing and uplifting the gifts of others, finding satisfaction in their accomplishment, relational pastoral presence, highly value open communication.*
- Preacher/Speaker – *Biblically centered, creative, relevant, inspirational, passionate. Excellent teacher.*
- Organizational – *Good time management, administrator, visionary, effective communicator.*