

Rev. Randall Gehring



Ordination Date: August 27, 1989

Education & Earned Degrees:

BA, Business Administration, 1981-1985, Augustana College, Sioux Falls, South Dakota

MDiv, Theology, 1985-1989, Luther Northwestern Theological Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota

Graduate Certificate, Non-profit

Church Leadership, 2020-2021, Dakota Wesleyan University, Mitchell, South Dakota

Current & Previously Held Positions

Our Saviors Lutheran Church, Senior Pastor, 2013-current, Sioux Falls, South Dakota

Bethesda Lutheran Church, Senior Pastor, 2004-2013, Ames, Iowa

Bethel Lutheran Church, Senior Pastor, 1997-2004, Wahpeton, North Dakota

Bethel Lutheran Church, Associate Pastor, 1993-1997, Wahpeton, North Dakota

Canton Lutheran Church, Associate Pastor, 1989-1993, Canton, South Dakota

Please tell us a bit about yourself.

I am the son of Clinton (deceased) and Margeret Gehring of Omaha, NE, and the brother of Barbara (Ted) Trede of Treynor, IA and Russell (Mary) Gehring of Omaha, NE. I am happily married to my wife of thirty-seven years, The Rev. Michele (Lage) Gehring, and together we are the proud parents of The Rev. Laura (David) Laughlin of Chaska, MN and The Rev. Thomas Gehring of Chicago, IL. We take great delight in our four-year-old grandson, Oliver Laughlin and enjoy those precious moments we are able to spend together.

I am an avid reader whose list of books to read never seems to grow shorter. I enjoy exercise, particularly bicycling, weightlifting, and hiking. I am a huge fan of all four seasons experienced in the upper Midwest and love being outside as much as possible, especially in a boat fishing in northern Minnesota.

I deeply value the relationships I have with family and close friends and regularly look for opportunities to be together. I have a strong work ethic but also strive to achieve a healthy work-life balance.

Describe what brings you energy as you consider the role of Bishop and how this might be a best use of your gifts, skills, and passion.

I live from a deeply-rooted, authentic, life-long faith in Jesus that has drawn me into a life that utilizes my gifts as a leader to the glory of God. As a servant leader, I seek to listen before I speak, I strive to collaborate rather than dictate, and I serve first and foremost the mission of the Church, believing steadfastly that I serve by virtue of God's call extended to me by the Church. My communication and organization skills and attention to detail serve me well as an administrator. I am an avid and quick learner and I strive to be flexible and adaptable, recognizing that the rate of change in most of our contexts will only continue to accelerate. Despite the challenges of decline facing the Church today, I lead from a perspective of hope believing God is still speaking and acting through the faithful witness of a mission-centered, gospel-proclaiming Church. Finally, I carefully steward the body God has given me so that I might most ably live the life to which God has called me.

As a candidate for Bishop, how would you describe God's call for the Nebraska Synod and your relation to this call?

In a season of decline, I believe the primary challenge facing the Church, including the Nebraska Synod, is to be a mission-centered Church that lives passionately from a position of faith and purpose while adapting to ever-changing contexts. As bishop, I would strive first to align the synod's ministry through intentional strategic planning. Secondly, I would develop an approach to congregational planning that could be adapted to a variety of contexts that would assist congregations and their pastoral leaders in the hard but important work of actively listening to the needs of their communities and then systematically identifying (1) their mission in light of those felt needs, (2) the assets available to them, and (3) the strategies for leveraging those assets for transformational ministry.

Reflect on the opportunities and challenges facing the Nebraska Synod in the next 6 years.

To me, the number one challenge/opportunity facing the Church, including the Nebraska Synod, is rising above a survival mindset rooted in scarcity to be a people—a Church—in mission for the sake of the world. If all we do is focus on restoring and maintaining what once was, we will eventually become irrelevant and die. If, however, we claim together the vast giftedness of the Church and the mission God has given us to proclaim the Good News of Jesus to a broken world, we will be agents of God's transformational grace in broken world providing hope and healing in ways that the world cannot. This ministry will necessarily draw us into the holy work of standing with those on the margins, proclaiming God's radical love for all people, and striving tirelessly for reconciliation and peace.