

Rev. Jan Peterson



Ordination Date: October 21, 2007

Education & Earned Degrees:
TEEM Certificate Program, 2004-2007, Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, Berkeley, CA

BS Accounting, 1979-1983, Dana College, Blair, NE

Current & Previously Held Positions

Augustana Lutheran Church, Pastor, Nov 2012-Current, Omaha, NE

Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Vicar/Associate Pastor, October 2004-October 2012, Omaha, NE

Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Youth Director, September 2002-October 2004

Glenn Kooiker, CPA, Tax Accountant, September 1998-September 2002

First National Bank, Various - last position AVP/Assistant Controller, 1983-1995

Please tell us a bit about yourself.

I am a second-career pastor having spent the first 15 years of my career working in the accounting field both in the banking industry and as a tax accountant. I was born in Council Bluffs, IA and lived there until attending college at Dana College in Blair. My early faith was nurtured by faithful leaders at Saint John Lutheran Church in Council Bluffs. Throughout my life I have been active in the church community to which I belonged at any given time singing, playing hand bells, assisting with worship, teaching Sunday school and Vacation Bible School, co-chairing the congregation's Women of the ELCA and church treasurer among other things.

While attending seminary I served as a Vicar at Holy Cross/Omaha where I also served my first call. I currently serve as the pastor at Augustana Lutheran Church in Omaha. My husband Steve and I have two grown daughters and five grandchildren. In my free time I enjoy spending time with my grandchildren, golfing, and reading.

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 am energized by the opportunity to continue building relationships across the Synod. I have served in several different roles in the Synod: LYON Board, Youth Mission trip Co-Chair, Synod Council, Consultation Committee, and the LGBTQIA+ Affirming Team. Serving with people from across the synod has given me a much fuller picture of the many ways in which congregations live out their mission and allowed me to have conversations with people with diverse views.

Though the career fields I've worked in are quite diverse, the gifts needed for each are among those necessary to serve as bishop. In the banking industry I utilized/developed administrative and financial expertise and as a pastor I have used additional gifts for listening, accompanying, mentoring both members and interns in the use of their gifts, and preaching. The Synod bishop serves as both the Pastor and CEO of the Synod. It excites me to consider a call that utilizes both my administrative/financial and pastoral gifts.

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

God calls us to continue God's mission of making disciples and spreading the Gospel message of grace, mercy, and radically inclusive love through word and deed. In a world filled with division, God's church meets this world's division with reconciling love, offering a ministry of reconciliation through honest conversation that respects our differences while affirming that we are all beloved children of God. These conversations teach us that more unites us than divides us, empowering us to work together to serve the hungry, the stranger, the marginalized and the oppressed.

As bishop, I would work with the synodical staff to accompany and collaborate with ministries across the Synod as they live out this mission in the unique ways God calls them in this season of ministry. This accompaniment includes pastoral care, visioning, education, preparation of and recruitment of leaders and administration of Synod business. As we emerge from the necessary separation of the pandemic, building relationships across the Synod and the wider church would be a large focus of the work.

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

Our strongest opportunities arise from our challenges.

The wilderness experience of the pandemic deeply affected our lives. We grieve what's been lost and we long to return to "normal." Yet, wilderness wandering fosters reliance on God and connection to the Spirit. Attuned to the Spirit, we are empowered to imagine new ways of living out God's mission while listening attentively to those who no longer find the church relevant.

The number of openings in the Synod has caused a shortage of transitional pastors to accompany congregations during the call process and longer wait times for their next leader. Amid these delays anxiety understandably rises and concern for the future becomes a focus of the ministry. This moment provides opportunities to continue discerning innovative solutions involving shared ministries with other congregations, ELCA and other ecumenical partners. Additionally, it provides opportunities to expand lay leadership, a space for broadening the definition of the "ideal" candidate for ministry leader, and renewed energy toward encouraging/educating future leaders.