



British Columbia Synod

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

A resource to aid in your reflection and discernment as we prepare for the election of our Bishop

(Adapted from the 2021 ELCA Toolkit)

Worship and Bible Study/Dwelling in the Word

Responsive Prayer (Evangelical Lutheran Worship p. 328)

Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal,
have mercy on us.

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead.* On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Almighty God, giver of all good gifts, look on your church with grace and guide the minds of those of us who shall choose the bishop of our BC synod, that we may receive a faithful servant who will care for your people and equip us for our ministries; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Leading God's People – Part 1

Exodus 18: 13–27 (Inclusive Bible)

The next morning Moses served as a judge and resolved the people's disputes, and was surrounded by them from dawn until dusk. When Jethro saw this, he asked, "What is this about, with all the people around you? Why do you sit there with the people from dawn until dusk?" Moses replied, "The people come to me for God's advice. If there is a dispute among them, they come to me to settle their differences, and I instruct them in the statutes and laws of God." Jethro said, "This is not a good way. You and your people will wear yourselves out. It is too great a burden. Let me give you some advice, and God will help you. Have them bring their cases before God, and represent them before God in those matters. Teach them the laws and the statutes, and instruct them to conduct themselves, and what they should do. At the same time, find able, God-fearing people, honest and incorruptible, and appoint them as officials over units of ten, of fifty, of hundreds and of thousands. These can serve as judges for the people at all times. Let them handle the simple cases, and bring difficult cases to you. Thus your burden will be both lightened and shared. By doing it this way, when God will require more of you in the future, the strain will not bring you down, and the people will arrive at their destination in peace." Moses heard Jethro's counsel, and took it. He selected wise people from all of Israel and appointed them as officials over units of ten, of fifty, of hundreds and of thousands. They heard the simpler cases daily, and the difficult cases they brought before Moses bid his father-in-law farewell, and Jethro returned home.

Discussion questions:

- What attributes or qualities are needed by God's people?
- What challenges will leaders face?
- What is God saying about the gifts needed in a leader?

Leading God's People – Part 2

Acts 16:6-15 (NRSV)

They went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia. When they had come opposite Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them; so, passing by Mysia, they went down to Troas. During the night Paul had a vision: there stood a man of Macedonia pleading with him and saying, 'Come over to Macedonia and help us.' When he had seen the vision, we immediately tried to cross over to Macedonia, being convinced that God had called us to proclaim the good news to them.

We set sail from Troas and took a straight course to Samothrace, the following day to Neapolis, and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia and a Roman colony. We remained in this city for some days. On the sabbath day we went outside the gate by the river, where we supposed there was a place of prayer; and we sat down and spoke to the women who had gathered there. A certain woman named Lydia, a worshipper of God, was listening to us; she was from the city of Thyatira and a dealer in purple cloth. The Lord opened her heart to listen eagerly to what was said by Paul. When she

and her household were baptized, she urged us, saying, 'If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come and stay at my home.' And she prevailed upon us.

1 Samuel 16:5-13 (Inclusive Bible)

Samuel said, 'Yes in peace; I have come to sacrifice to Yahweh. Consecrate yourselves and come to the sacrifice with me.' Then he consecrated Jesse and his children and invited them to the sacrifice. When they arrived, and Samuel saw Eliab, and said to himself, 'Surely God's anointed stands here before Yahweh.' ⁷But Yahweh said to Samuel, 'Pay no attention to appearance and height; I have rejected him. Yahweh does not see as mortals see; mortals see only appearances but Yhwh sees into the heart' Then Jesse called Abinadab to pass before Samuel, who said 'No. Yahweh has not chosen this one.' Next came Shammah, but Samuel said, 'Not this one either.' Seven sons were presented to Samuel by Jesse, who said 'Yahweh has not chosen any of these.' Samuel said 'Are these all the sons you have?' 'There is still the youngest' Jesse said 'but he is tending the sheep.' Samuel said 'Send for him; we will not begin the sacrificial banquet until the lad arrives.' So they sent for the boy, a ruddy youth with bright eyes and handsome to behold. Yahweh said, 'Rise and anoint this one.' Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed the boy in the presence of his brothers, and from that day forward the Spirit of Yahweh came upon David and was with him. Then Samuel set out on his way to Ramah.

1 Corinthians 12:13-14, 27-28 (NRSV)

For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; then deeds of power, then gifts of healing, forms of assistance, forms of leadership, various kinds of tongues.

Reflection questions:

- What attributes or qualities are needed by God's people?
- What challenges will leaders face?
- What is God saying about the gifts needed in a leader?

The Synod We Are

From Synthesis of Key Themes (Synod Wide Conversations) "Overall, certain key themes stood out from all dialogues. The most frequently cited theme was a need for more communication, connection and collaboration. This applies to within and between congregations, the Synod, as well as with local communities and other denominations."

A Missional Mindset

- Thinking beyond ourselves – always

- Profound respect for each other
- Listening is critical
- Curiosity and Exploration
- Shared leadership
- Going not knowing
- “Together with” versus “doing for”
- Accompaniment
- Acting for the love of the world (vs love of the church)
- Being vulnerable
- Shared power
- God is already at work in our neighbours and our neighbourhoods
- To be able to receive the gifts of others
- We do not love our neighbours when we only see their needs and not their gifts
- Leadership is holding space and being a catalyst for the best work of others

What is a synod?

Working definition: “to walk along side” or “to accompany”

ELCIC / BC SYNOD Constitutional provisions

(ELCIC) ARTICLE XIV Section 1.

This church shall be served by a bishop who shall be its chief pastor and chief executive officer. The bishop shall be on the roster of pastors of this church.

(BC Synod) Bylaw 12, Section 6.

The Bishop shall: a. serve as leader and counsellor of this Synod; b. be its chief executive officer and oversee the offices of chairperson, secretary, and treasurer, co-ordinate the work of all staff of this Synod, and appoint all committees not otherwise provided for; c. ensure that the constitution and bylaws of this Synod are observed and that its resolutions are implemented; d. visit the congregations and pastors of this Synod and confer with them concerning their spiritual and temporal welfare; e. have the privilege of voice in each congregation or ministry of this Synod, including congregational meetings; f. ordain or consecrate, or provide for the ordination or consecration of, all candidates accepted for the ministerial office; g. install, or provide for the installation of, the pastors of all congregations of this Synod and other rostered ministers called to service within this Synod, and induct into office the other officers of this Synod; h. be ex officio member of all committees of this Synod, its chief representative on the boards of directors or trustees of all institutions in which this Synod is entitled to representation; i. be the custodian of the seal of this Synod and attest all documents as required; j. appoint the (Synod) archivist for this Synod; k. report and make observations and recommendations to each regular convention of this Synod concerning its mission and ministry.

Reflecting on the Ministry of our Synod

The election of a bishop is a call process. The constitutional requirements listed above only make up a part of the ministry of the bishop. Thus, engaging in

prayerful reflection and seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit are indispensable aspects of the process of nomination and election. Here are some questions to help you think about the ministry of our synod while we prepare for the election of our bishop:

- What are we able to do better as a synod and congregations working together for the sake of Christ's mission than as individual congregations?
- Considering the definition and responsibilities of a synod and this synod's mission work, what has the synod done well and
 - what do you see as areas that may need a little more attention?
- What should congregations in the synod expect of the synod's bishop?
- What should the synod's bishop expect of congregations in the synod?

The Bishop We Seek

Reflection question:

- In light of the Bible study and reflection, what are the spiritual gifts and leadership attributes that are the most important for a bishop in this synod at this time?

Our Ongoing Prayer

O God, you have called your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.