



## Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

### **For Information Contact:**

Pr. Hope Deutscher

NW MN Synod Assembly Media Relations Coordinator

Cell: 701-730-5051; [hdeutscher@gmail.com](mailto:hdeutscher@gmail.com)

## **Northwestern Minnesota Synod of the ELCA Assembly Calls Pastor Bill Tesch as its Next Bishop**

**Moorhead, MN.:** After five ballots, more than 400 Rostered Leaders and Lay Voting Members of the Northwestern Minnesota Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) has called Pastor Bill Tesch as its Bishop-Elect.

“I’m incredibly excited!” Bishop-elect Tesch said. “This is an amazing call, it’s an amazing honor. I’m deeply humbled and I’m still processing it and will be doing so for a while. I’m grateful to God and to the people of this synod for this opportunity.”

The fifth and final ballot results were: 265 Pastor Bill Tesch, Sioux Falls, SD; 161 Pastor Genelle Netland, Bemidji, MN. A simply majority of votes were need.

Tesch, who grew up in Green Bay, Wisconsin, has been serving as the Director of Evangelical Mission and Associate to the Bishop in South Dakota since 2007. He is also a Chaplain (Colonel) in the SD Air National Guard.

“This is the beginning of an exciting collaboration with the people of this synod as we explore how to be the church in the twenty-first century, how to reach people with the exciting good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ.” Bishop-Elect Tesch says. “I’ll be collaborating with the people of this synod to explore how we can raise up leaders, both rostered and lay leaders, across our synod to serve congregations, especially our rural congregations. I’ll also be exploring how we can collaborate and reach out to people who have experienced marginalization, including our Native American brothers and sisters.”

In the ELCA, Synod Bishops serve six-year terms. According to the Synod’s Constitution, the bishop is elected by the Synod Assembly by ecclesiastical ballot. The new bishop will assume office on September 1, 2019. Installation of the new bishop will be held September 8, 2019, in Moorhead, MN. Reverend Dr. Lawrence Wohlrabe, who began his ministry as NW MN Synod Bishop on September 1, 2007, is retiring.

### **Sharon Jospelson Elected Synod Vice President**

The Assembly also elected Sharon Josephson of Detroit Lakes, MN, as Synod Vice President. On the third ballot, Josephson received 214 votes; John Wold of Underwood, MN, received 208 votes. 212 Votes were needed to be elected Vice President. The Vice President is a lay person who chairs the Synod Council, and in the event of a bishop’s death, resignation or disability, would consult with the Presiding ELCA Bishop to convene the Northwestern MN Synod Council to arrange for the conduct of duties of the bishop until a new bishop shall be elected or until the bishop can resume full performances of the duties of office.

“I am honored to have been elected vice president of the Northwestern Minnesota Synod of the ELCA. The Holy Spirit is working in amazing ways as we elect a new bishop today,” Josephson said. “I promise to support and help the leadership of the synod as we move into the adventure of God’s plan for the future.”

Josephson, is a member of Trinity Lutheran Church in Detroit Lakes, MN, where she has served in a number of roles on committees and as a 3-term congregational president. She has also served as the chair of the Bishop Election Committee, a member of Synod Council, and a 2-time Churchwide Assembly voting member. She is a retired Senior High School studies teacher and is a former congressional staff member for Congressman Collin Peterson.

The three-day Synod Assembly’s theme *Building a Bigger Table*” focused on discerning, electing and welcoming a new synod bishop; recognizing and praising God as the Master Table-Builder; and understanding that all Christians are called to welcome everyone to God’s Table.

=====

*The Northwestern Minnesota (NW MN) Synod of the ELCA consists of 86,927 baptized members in 226 congregations, served by 341 rostered ministers in 8 conferences in the northwest corner of the state. Known as the church of "God's work. Our hands.," the ELCA emphasizes the saving grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ, unity among Christians and service in the world. The ELCA's roots are in the writings of the German church reformer Martin Luther.*