



**South Carolina Synod**  
**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**  
God's work. Our hands.

**2020 BISHOP ELECTION GLOSSARY for SOUTH CAROLINA SYNOD**

**Bishop:** A bishop is an active minister of Word and Sacrament (pastor) in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), who is elected to a six year term to provide care and oversight for the congregations and rostered ministers of a synod. The bishop is the chief executive officer of the synod and may be re-elected; no term limits.

**Bishop Elections Committee:** A group of people selected by the synod council to develop and implement a process for the election of a new bishop. Our Bishop Elections Committee members are: Deacon Shelley Allen, Ms. Melantha Ardry, Deacon Sarah Bowers, Rev. Leroy Cannon, Rev. Emily Edenfield, Deacon Lexanne Graves, Rev. Wayne Kannaday, and Rev. Jorge Leone.

**Call:** For Lutherans, “call” or “calling” refers to the vocations of every Christian—the roles in which they live out their baptismal faith, such as family member, citizen, worker, or church member. In the context of public ministry, a call is an official invitation to become a public minister in this church. A pastor or deacon receives a call as he or she begins serving a congregation, institution, or agency of the church.

**Candidate:** A person whose name has been brought forward during the ecclesiastical ballot as a potential nominee for bishop.

**Conference:** A geographic area of the synod clustering congregations into collegial and cooperative groups to carry out the work of the synod. The South Carolina Synod has nine conferences (Amelia, Heartland, Upstate, Midlands, Epiphany, Western, Foothills, Saxe Gotha, & Coastal), each led by a dean.

**Church Council:** The church council of the ELCA functions as the board of directors, serving as the interim legislative authority between meetings of the churchwide assembly. The church council meets at least two times each year and is composed of at least 33 and not more than 45 members who are elected to six-year terms by the churchwide assembly, together with the four churchwide officers (presiding bishop, vice president, secretary, and treasurer).

**Churchwide Assembly:** The churchwide assembly is the ELCA’s highest legislative authority. It reviews the work of the churchwide ELCA officers and churchwide units. It establishes ELCA policy and adopts the budget for the churchwide organization. It has sole authority to amend the constitution and bylaws of the ELCA. The churchwide assembly meets triennially in regular session.

**Churchwide Organization:** The churchwide organization is one of the three expressions of the ELCA. It functions interdependently with congregations and synods of the ELCA. It is responsible for developing churchwide policy,

standards for leadership, including ordained and rostered lay ministries and affiliation of institutions, and the coordination of the work of the ELCA both globally and throughout the territory of the ELCA.

**Pastor:** A rostered Minister of Word and Sacrament who enters onto the roster by the rite of ordination. A pastor may serve in a congregational setting or in a non-congregational setting such as a nursing home, hospital, or college campus.

**Deacon:** A rostered Minister of Word and Service who enters onto the roster by the rite of ordination. Deacons serve in a variety of settings including congregations, synodical and churchwide offices, and specialized ministries.

**Dean:** From the Latin decanus, an official in charge of ten monks. In the ELCA a conference dean coordinates the work of congregations within the conference.

**Ecclesiastical:** Of or relating to a church (“ekklesia” in Greek), especially as an established institution. This term is often used to refer to the organizational and legislative functions of the church.

**Ecclesiastical Ballot:** The ballot process by which the SC Synod Bishop is elected and under which all nominations are made on the first ballot at the annual Synod Assembly.

**Election of a bishop:** The voting members of the synod assembly cast votes and call a pastor to be the bishop for the synod. While this process involves voting, it is a discernment of call that is guided by the gifts of the candidates that meet the needs of the synod.

**Laity:** A term referring to the people of God. This is typically used to refer to those who are not members of either Ministers of Word and Sacrament (pastor) or Ministers of Word and Service (deacon). The collective community of lay people is sometimes called the laity.

**Minister:** The word means “servant,” and is sometimes used as a title for lay people who perform certain duties within the congregation, such as a “communion minister.” It can be used as a noun or a verb, and it refers to the work of all Christians—to share God’s boundless love in the world.

**Presiding Bishop:** An ordained minister of Word and Sacrament who is a teacher of the faith of this church and who provides leadership for the life and witness of this church. The term is rooted in worship (“the bishop presides over the worshiping assembly”) and the presiding bishop serves as the chief pastor of the ELCA, the chief executive officer of the ELCA churchwide organization, and the chief ecumenical officer of the church. The presiding bishop is elected to a six-year term and may be reelected. The current presiding bishop is the Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton.

**Region:** There are nine geographic regions within the ELCA. Regions are comprised of several synods and serve as a means to coordinate responses by synods and the churchwide organization to mission and program opportunities within the region. The South Carolina Synod is partnered with Virginia, North Carolina, Southeastern (GA, TN, AL, ), Florida Bahamas, and the Caribbean Synods to make up Region 9.

**Roster:** The ELCA and individual Synods maintain official listings of ministers called rosters. There are two rosters of ministers: Ministers of Word and Sacrament and Ministers of Word and Service. Both of these ministers enter onto these rosters by the rite of ordination. Currently, there are more than 17,000 rostered ministers in the ELCA.

**Rostered Ministers:** Pastors and deacons who serve in congregations and other places of specialized ministry, such as academic institutions, hospitals, senior care centers, campus ministry, outdoor camping ministry, and mission development.

**Synod:** A synod is typically a geographical grouping of congregations, with the exception of the Slovak Zion Synod. Each synod, in accompaniment with the churchwide organization, bears primary responsibility for the oversight of the life and mission of the ELCA in its territory. The ELCA's 65 synods vary greatly in size, geography, membership, staffing and program. Our smallest synod has 30 congregations — the largest nearly 300. The synods are grouped into nine regions, which are points of connection for them and the churchwide organization. Synods unite the work of congregations within their areas, serve as regional support, and guide pastoral and other staff candidates. In order to strengthen the relationship between synod leaders and the churchwide office, many churchwide teams relate to and support the work of the synods.

**Synod Assembly:** The synod assembly is the highest legislative authority of the synod, with a regular meeting held annually. All rostered ministers under call, officers, elected synod council leadership, retired pastors, and representative lay members from congregations within the synod serve as voting members.

**Synod Council:** Between meetings of the synod assembly, the synod council serves as the board of directors of the synod and the interim legislative authority.

**Synod Staff:** Staff in the Office of Bishop who carry out the day to day work of the synod, from coordinating training events and leading worship to conversations about community and basic communication. The staff maintains the connection between congregational ministries and the ministry of the larger church.

**Voting Member:** Lay members who are elected by the congregations of this synod together with pastors and deacons under call on the roster of this synod, synodically authorized ministers, retired pastors, the officers of the synod, and members of the synod council who participate in the business conducted at synod assemblies. The ELCA no longer uses the term “delegate,” opting instead for “voting member.” Voting members vote their conscience and are not restricted to vote the will of their congregation. They are encouraged to vote as the Holy Spirit moves them.