

**Ecclesiastical Ballot Information Sessions**  
**February 24 and March 9, 2008**  
**St. Paul, Davenport; St. Paul, Ottumwa;**  
**First, Cedar Rapids; Faith, Clive**

Information sessions were held at four locations throughout the Southeastern Iowa Synod recently. Those sessions included a litany requesting the presence of the Holy Spirit, *Bible* readings, information about election processes and, finally, discussion. 20 – 25 people attended each session. The main resource used during the presentation was *Choosing a Bishop: Questions to Assist in Preparation*.

Responding to a request at the session at First in Cedar Rapids, this report is a summary of the input gathered during the discussion portion of the session. The attendees were asked to list 1) helpful qualities of a bishop, 2) current needs of our synod, and 3) questions that might be asked of candidates.

**Helpful Qualities of a Bishop**

- ❖ Administrative skills
- ❖ Gifts in preaching and teaching
- ❖ Rooted in prayer
- ❖ Showing a love for God
- ❖ Pastoral skills
- ❖ Sense of mission work
- ❖ Above reproach
- ❖ Listening/open mind
- ❖ Communication skills
- ❖ Awareness of limitations
- ❖ Openness to growth
- ❖ Fairness
- ❖ Conflict resolver
- ❖ Compassionate
- ❖ Respect for the Sabbath
- ❖ Visionary
- ❖ Holding others accountable; being held accountable
- ❖ High expectations
- ❖ Willingness to be publically passionate for the means of grace
- ❖ ELCA promoter
- ❖ Grounded in the Confessions and Scripture
- ❖ Collaborative skills
- ❖ Humor
- ❖ Assertiveness
- ❖ Hard worker, but not workaholic
- ❖ Pastor to pastors
- ❖ Outstanding preacher
- ❖ Compassionate

- ❖ Clear thinker
- ❖ Peacemaker
- ❖ Thoughtfully decisive
- ❖ Worldly (aware of world affairs)
- ❖ Aware of context of modern America
- ❖ “Business sense”
- ❖ Collaborator
- ❖ Share devotional life
- ❖ Non-agenda
- ❖ Servant of the Gospel
- ❖ Presence commands attention
- ❖ “Non-nervous in the service”

### **Current Needs of the Synod**

- Reevaluation of organization and role of conferences
- Stewardship interpretation
- Stronger links between the synod and congregations
- Concerns about declining congregations
- Let conflicting voices be heard
- Challenges of congregation size and geography
- Continued support of rostered and lay persons
- Continued support of the Center for Renewal
- Allow the Spirit in transition
- Accommodation
- Reach out to youth (post confirmation)
- Develop financial and people resources
- Expand world mission
- Membership
- “Hospice for congregations”

### **Questions for Candidates**

- How do you care for yourself physically and spiritually?
- What process do you use for conflict resolution?
- How have you used a collaborative leadership style in the past?
- Share your vision for mission in our synod.
- How do you create trust?
- How have you encouraged prayerful discernment?
- Why did you allow your name to go forward in this call process?
- How will you deal with the level of isolation (lonely call) that a Bishop has?
- What frightens you the most about this call?
- Where is grace in light of the ELCA’s social statements?
- What is the relationship between law and grace?

- How can the ELCA and the Southeastern Iowa Synod be more relevant in the lives of common Iowans?
- How can you help us (all Iowa) be grounded in our faith?
- How would you model your faith?
- List top 5 strengths and top 5 concerns of our synod as you perceive them.
- What is vision for maintaining and expanding relationships with ecumenical and foreign partners?
- If the title bishop were not used, what title would you choose for yourself in that position?
- How can our synod address moral issues?
- How can we encourage civil discourse over divisive issues?