

## **Metropolitan New York Synod, ELCA Process for the Election of a Synodical Bishop Adopted at 2012 Synod Assembly**

### **Procedure**

A Bishop Election Committee (the “committee”), comprised of ten (10) members, six (6) lay and four (4) clergy, will be selected and installed at the Synod Assembly preceding the Assembly at which the election for bishop will occur (the “Electing Assembly”). [See Appendix A for selection and composition of this Committee].

The Committee will be charged with soliciting nominations from any baptized member of a congregation within the Synod and from any group of baptized members within the Synod, including, but not limited to, congregation councils, conferences, committees, and organizations, for the office of Bishop.

The period during which nominations may be made will begin on September 1 in the year prior to the Electing Assembly and end on January 1 of the year of the Electing Assembly. A nomination must be physically received or post-marked by January 1 to be considered by the committee. The form for making a nomination for the office of Bishop will be available on the website of the Synod no later than September 1 of the year prior to the Electing Assembly. The form will contain detailed instructions for its submission.

All nominations will be received by the Chairperson of the Committee who will send written acknowledgement of receipt to the maker (individual or group) of the nomination.

After the close of the nominating period, the Committee will prayerfully and deliberately select up to seven (7) nominees to be included on the first ballot for the election of Bishop, one of whom shall be the current Bishop if she or he is open to reelection. This selection process will include face to face interviews with the nominees and careful consideration of how each nominee’s gifts and strengths for leadership and ministry matches up with the strategic plan of the Synod. During this selection process, the Committee will receive written assurance from each of these nominees that he or she consents to stand for election as Bishop and that he or she will participate fully and willingly in the election processes both prior to and during the Electing Assembly, including the providing of all biographical information requested, meeting with the Committee, and attendance at the Electing Assembly and at all informational forums prior to the Electing Assembly. The Committee will have background checks and screening performed, in accordance with Synod and Churchwide guidelines, on each of the seven nominees prior to releasing the names and biographies of the nominees.

The names and biographies of the nominees will be announced by the Committee by April 1 of the year of the Electing Assembly. Such announcement will be

made via the Synod website, synod e-letter, and by written mailing to each congregation of the Synod. At the same time, the Committee will provide a schedule of informational forums (dates and locations) to be held with the candidates.

In accordance with the schedule provided by the Committee, four (4) informational forums will be held during which members of the Synod may meet, hear and ask questions of the nominees for Bishop. The Committee will determine the form and conduct of the forums. All nominees will be required to be present at each of the forums. The locations of the forums will be varied geographically within the Synod and be selected in order to provide for the broadest attendance possible. All forums will be scheduled to occur within the shortest time-frame practicable, and will be concluded no later than the Thursday of the week prior to the Electing Assembly.

The first ballot for the election of the Bishop will contain the names of the nominees and one additional space in which a voting member at the Electing Assembly may nominate any other ELCA-rostered clergy person for the office of Bishop. In this manner the ballot is still an ecclesiastical ballot within the provisions of the Constitution of the Synod. If any nominee, including a nominee written on the ballot at the Assembly, receives the required number of votes to be elected (three-fourths of the votes), that nominee shall be deemed elected as Bishop. If no nominee receives the required number of votes to elect on the first ballot, it shall be considered the nominating ballot, and successive ballots shall be held in accordance with current constitutional provisions, until an individual is elected as Bishop. None of the nominees placed on the ballot by the Committee shall have the right to withdraw his or her name before the second ballot. Any individual nominated on the first ballot by a voting member of the Electing Assembly shall have the right to withdraw his or her name from consideration prior to the second ballot.

During the Electing Assembly the Committee shall provide opportunities for questions to be placed to all the nominees and for each nominee to address the voting members as under current practice.

### **Timetable for Next Election of a Bishop (2014 Synod Assembly)**

2012 Assembly	Consideration and vote on new procedure
January - March 2013	Commission receives nominations for Election Committee from Conferences
2013 Assembly	Members of Election Committee selected by lot and installed
June-December 2013	Election Committee meets, elects chair, adds members if necessary, formulates selection plan, develops Bible study materials relating to office/election of bishop for use by congregations and conferences.

September 1, 2013	Nomination Form made available on Synod website.
September 1, 2013- January 1, 2014	Nominations received by Chairperson of Committee
January 1-March 31, 2014	Nominees interviewed. Background checks.
April 1, 2014	Nominees announced via website, e-letter and written letter to congregations. Schedule of forums announced.
May 1, 2014	Informational forums begin to be held.
Assembly 2014	Election of Bishop

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Process for nominees to the Bishop Election Committee**

**10 persons to be placed on the committee: 6 lay and 4 clergy**

**Selection to happen by lot (Acts 1:21-26 – the choice of Matthias to be an apostle)**

<sup>21</sup>So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, <sup>22</sup>beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us — one of these must become a witness with us to his resurrection." <sup>23</sup>So they proposed two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also known as Justus, and Matthias. <sup>24</sup>Then they prayed and said, "Lord, you know everyone's heart. Show us which one of these two you have chosen <sup>25</sup>to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place." <sup>26</sup>And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias; and he was added to the eleven apostles. NRSV

**Selection to occur at the 2013 Synod Assembly: two baskets, one with laypersons' and one with clergypersons' names; to be drawn by one of the ecumenical guests visiting assembly that year.**

**Each conference of the synod will be asked to submit suggestions to serve on the committee: 3 laypersons and 2 clergy.**

Names do not necessarily need to be from the specific conference that suggests

Names must be of active members of a parish in the Metro NY Synod

In the suggestion of names, Conferences are asked to be mindful of the great diversity of our synod when suggesting names, being conscious of ethnic, geographic, economic, type/size of congregation, age, LGBT, other, issues

Person suggested must be contacted and agree to serve if chosen, understanding that there will be several meetings shortly after the 2013 Synod assembly, but that there will be a heavy commitment of work from January – March of 2014. (The dean of the conference that suggests will be responsible for securing permission from the nominee.)

It is understood that no person that might be a potential candidate for bishop shall be a person serving on the selection/call committee, thus any pastor who believes she/he might discern that God is calling them to serve as bishop shall not allow their name to be submitted

Person must understand the vital nature of confidentiality within the process, and will be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement and pledge before the 2013 Synod assembly that they will abide by this

Though a person can be suggested any number of times by any conference, should they meet the above, their name will appear in the “selection basket” only once

Trusting the guidance of the Holy Spirit, as happened in Acts, the names shall be drawn. Should the committee determine that they do not effectively reflect the rich diversity of our Synod, they may choose to appoint **no more than 5** additional persons to serve

The committee shall choose its own chairperson, understanding that this person will have responsibilities throughout the process in addition to committee meetings (including receiving potential bishop candidate names/resumes and supervising any contracted staff person to assist the committee with its work)