

In October 2019, Women in Ministry in the ELCA Sierra Pacific Synod met for a retreat. At the end of our retreat we had a discussion about the upcoming Bishop election. Here are the notes from our discussion.

Thanks. Pastor Connie Winter-Eulberg

Women in Ministry Retreat, Monterey, CA October 15, 2019

What are the major issues for the ELCA?

- Racism and the lack of diversity.
- Clear vision and mission.
- Social justice
- Advocacy- speak out strong and clear on what we have agreed is following the teachings of Jesus.
- Help when a church decides to close.
- Need resources for clergy in how to be bi- vocational. Lay people need training on how to work with a bi-vocational pastor.
- Anxiety in churches. People want immediate resolution. We need to name our fears. Clergy and leaders need training on adaptive leadership.
- Some people think that the Synod office doesn't care about them as churches see decline in parishioners. Synod needs to be proactive and bring small churches together so they can understand that they are not alone. A visible Synod staff is important.
- Congregational resources are needed and need to be easily accessible.

Example: The Episcopal church in northern CA has been successful in doing a program called, "Equipping the Beloved Community". This program gathers congregational members together for relationship building, workshops and a meal.

** . Where God is leading us, God is with us.

The Qualities We See as Important for a Candidate for Bishop:

- A person with a strong Social Justice commitment.
- Someone who can communicate and listen to the diverse populations in our Synod.
- A visionary person who can respectfully honor the past as we look forward.
- Someone who can think creatively about how to effectively follow the mission of the church and not always doing "what we have always done."
- A person who is equipped with the Gifts of the Spirit: wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord.