



Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

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Results of the Metro D.C. Synod Leadership Transition 2019 Survey Transition Task Force

The survey was open for seven weeks, running from Jan. 28 until Mar. 15.

I. We received 76 responses. Of those, **53 (69.7%) are from rostered ministers of word & sacrament**, nine are from congregations, seven are from rostered ministers of word & service, four are from youth groups, and three responses came from individuals (one youth who does not belong to a youth group, one congregation council member, and one who identified as “parishioner.”).

II. "Congregational vitality and growth" is, by far, the area of synod life survey respondents believe should be prioritized. It received 62 votes. Coming in second place was "continuing education and professional development of rostered ministers" (27 votes). There was a three-way tie for third place. "Social justice advocacy and participation in movements," "identifying and supporting candidates for rostered ministry," and "discipleship and spiritual formation/deepening" each got 26 votes. We asked respondents to pick their top three.

<i>Area of Synod Life</i>	<i>Number of Responses (select three)</i>
Congregational vitality and growth	62
Continuing education and professional development of rostered ministers	27
Identifying and supporting candidates for rostered ministry	26
Social justice advocacy and participation in movements	26
Discipleship and spiritual formation/deepening	26
Interfaith dialogue	15
Activities and opportunities for youth and family ministry	13
Other	13
Supporting ministries of the ELCA	6
Supporting local charitable causes	5

Respondents that chose “other” wrote-in the following:

- Lay leader development (2 responses)
- Racial equity
- Reconciled in Christ
- Reframing conversations about growth to be more hopeful about what God is doing.
- Creating new ministries
- Social justice advocacy that is not part of movements
- Support for rostered persons in the call process
- Climate change/global warming
- Pastoral support of pastors
- Training for outreach/evangelism
- Work with other ELCA bishops to strengthen our life in the gospel in word and sacrament
- Supporting rostered ministers in the changing environment
- Encouraging and supporting congregations in seeking new ways to bear God’s creative and redeeming Word in the world – newness that grows out of spiritual deepening, that makes congregations more vital, and that engages us in doing justice.

III. Of the 76 responses, 69 answered our question regarding which synod endeavors they found most effective - 46 answered our question about which synod activities they believe should change or end. **The New Connections campaign receives by far the most mentions as an activity respondents find effective.** Other mentions include youth activities (such as the triennial gathering), campus ministry, and continuing education/workshops for pastors and lay leaders.

Below is a list of common responses – those that were mentioned at least twice – we received to these questions.

Synod endeavors that have been effective:

Synod Endeavor	Number of Mentions
New Connections Campaign	30
Intentional Impact/Stewardship Workshops	10
Youth Events (Gathering, Chrysalis, Shekinah)	9
The Journey	5
Coaching	5
Evangelism Events/Workshops	4
Building Puentes	4
Public joint worships services (i.e. Reformation Service)	4
Continuing education opportunities	3
Social Justice Advocacy	3

Regarding synod activities that should change or end, a plurality of respondents wrote "none" or "no." There were several non-specific responses that encouraged synod leaders to focus on activities that have a meaningful impact, rather than managing activities that do not. These responses did not cite a particular initiative that should change or end.

Other items listed included: letting go of the annual Reformation Sunday service at the National Cathedral, changing the way youth ministry is structured (to be less focused on suburban churches), and some respondents suggested specific improvements to the New Connections Campaign. There were a couple responses that said Building Puentes should end, and two respondents suggested broadening the scope of the racial equity team to include other types of discrimination (gender, sexual orientation, class, other religions, etc.). One person – perhaps ironically – said that “outreach to rostered ministers” should end.

Below is a list of common responses – those that were mentioned at least twice – that specifically named a synod activity or endeavor that should change or end.

Synod activities/initiatives that should change or end:

Synod Activity/Initiative	Number of Mentions
None – nothing should change/end	17
Building Puentes/Activities in Puerto Rico	3
Broaden scope of racial equity team	2
Reformation Service	2
Synod Youth Ministry Model	2

IV. Regarding the kind of leadership respondents would like see from the synod office, we have received a wide range of feedback. Seventy-four respondents answered the question, and most respondents listed three to five qualities. **Many answers mentioned "bold" social justice leadership, engagement with congregations on growth, and pastoral care.** Some respondents said more communication would be helpful and one person said that they would like to know what the synod office is and how it's organized.

V. Seventy-four respondents also answered the question regarding **the leadership skills they believe are most necessary at this time.** The most common traits mentioned related to visioning, **listening, organizational, and communications skills.** **Additionally, several** respondents mentioned **pastoral qualities** such as prayerfulness, preaching skills, and theological competence. Responses were grouped into categories based on likeness.

Below are categories of responses that were most popular (more than five responses):

Leadership Skills Most Important	Number of Mentions
Openness to Change / Discernment and Visioning Skills	18
Listening Skills	17
Organizational / Administrative / Management Skills	15
Communications Skills	15

Spiritual Depth and Pastoral Competence	15
Emotional Intelligence / Cultural Awareness	11
Charismatic / Interpersonal Skills	11
Ethical / Professional / Trustworthy	11
Compassion / Love	8
Courage / Risk Taking	8
Responsive / Decisive	7
Creativity	5

VI. We received 72 responses to our question regarding **the spiritual and personal qualities** that are particularly important for the synod staff in this time. **The most common responses related to prayerfulness and integrity.** Other common responses related to self-care, joy, kindness, social justice awareness (of one's self and community), and good communications skills (able to challenge, lead and love).