



2019 Synod Assembly BISHOP Candidate Information Form

Candidate Name:

The Rev. Karen L Brau

Current Position:

Senior Pastor, Luther Place Memorial Church

Congregation Membership:

Luther Place Church, Washington, DC

Previous Positions:

Amazing Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church, Baltimore, MD, Pastor, 1997-2008; Amazing Grace Church, Co-Pastor, 1996-1997; Amazing Grace Parish (Bethany, Trinity and Martin Luther), Co-Pastor, 1992-1996; Bethany Lutheran Church, Baltimore, MD, 1990-1992.



Date and Year of Ordination:

October 28, 1990

Education and Earned Degree

1988, Master of Divinity, Louisville, Presbyterian Theological Seminary., Louisville, KY. 1981, BA, Hamilton College, Clinton, NY.

List up to five (5) current or past synodical or Churchwide activities that would inform your service as bishop of this synod.

2015-present, Chair, Metro DC Synod Racial Equity Team; 2010- present, Member of the ELCA Organizing for Mission Network; 2017-present, Trained by the ELCA and serving as a Coach; 1992-1996, worked with the Delaware-Maryland Synod and the ELCA to consolidate Bethany, Trinity and Martin Luther Lutheran Churches and to create the new congregation, Amazing Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church in Baltimore, Maryland. Periodically teaching DC based classes for Gettysburg Seminary in Urban ministry and Transformational Ministry 2009-2016.

List up to five (5) current or past community-related activities that would inform your service as bishop of this synod.



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2009 - 2014, Luther Place Core Team leader and member of Washington Interfaith Network (Industrial Areas Foundation Affiliate); 2015 present, Steering Committee WIN; 2009, DC Marriage Equality Clergy Group; 2008 - present, Board N Street Village; 2012- present Organizer for the Ambassadors of Praise Choir (Partnership N Street Village and Luther Place); 2001-2008 Founding Co-Chair Baltimore Regional Initiative Developing Genuine Equality (Gamaliel Foundation Affiliate).

What gifts would you bring to the office of bishop of this synod?

Faith and Joy in the Good News of Jesus Christ; Spirit led; leadership development of self and others; creativity; practice in broad based Community Organizing; an understanding of power (the ability to get things done) in public and in congregations; experience in leading change tied to a vision of a substantive gospel witness; teamwork; sharing leadership; going outside the doors of the church; life long learner; agility and grace; and learning from failures.

What do you see as the principal challenge to this synod in the next six (6) years, and how would you address it?

The principal challenge I see is how to be church in this time — when people are less and less likely to affiliate and we face challenging social and political environments? And, what role does the synod have in nurturing and supporting congregations while engaging in truth telling about change, so that our congregation's have spaces of inclusion for the diversity of people present in our DC Metro area and spiritual capacity for trying new things and getting outside of our doors?

I would offer 4 pathways:

1. In a time when there are multitudes of messages communicating hope and hate, discerning the voice of our gracious and loving God is difficult. I would commit to finding money so our synod could offer a grant to each rostered leader to support regular spiritual direction with the hope of building up contemplative practices that support us in listening to God.
2. To nurture the body of the Baptized and to grow leaders in spiritual maturity, I would commit to organizing resources so that our synod would offer regular collective leadership development opportunities, focusing on exploring congregational development in conjunction with contemplative practices. This pathway would set a priority of engaging young adults.
3. Mindful that we are called to love our neighbor, equipping our congregations to do this can happen through engaging with the spiritual practice of community organizing. I would commit to finding money for a Community Organizer to be part of the synod staff as an investment in the practicing of listening to our communities and hearing what life is like in our contexts, particularly for the vulnerable. Through listening and relationship building, we would have the



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opportunity to discern relevant action that joins Jesus in a prophetic call of good news to the poor and release to the captives (Luke 4:18-19) through public ministry.

4. As members of the ELCA, we are currently documented as the whitest of the white denominations in the US. And from my experience in serving for almost 29 years in ordained ministry, the institutional inequities behind our current reality block us from a consistently substantive witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ. I would direct Synod time, energy and money to practice a deeper and broader engagement with Racial Equity concretized in discerning equitable outcomes for our synod. In part, this is about power and the way that it affects every decision we make — who is advantaged, who is disadvantaged, and who is not at the table who should be.

Describe your leadership style.

My leadership style is Spirit led, with a measure of structure that allows for containers to get this done. It is relational, in that I listen to people who hold power as well as those who do not in gathering a sense of opportunities and steps for leading. My leadership is creative and gives space for people around me to be creative as well. It is team oriented and collaborative, mindful of the many different ways of looking at the same situation. My style is to learn from books and continuing ed events that help develop my leadership skills, as well as to learn from failures. My style is to develop the leaders around me, giving them opportunity for growth and sometimes putting them out front.