

Bishop's Task Force on Diversity-Equity-Inclusion

Despite the availability and desire of a wide range of individuals from different ethnicities, nations of origin, sexual orientations, and gender expressions, to serve the Church, the Northern Illinois Synod remains largely homogenous within their Rostered Ministers, church staffing, and congregation membership. At the same time, the Northern Illinois Synod continues to have open calls and unfilled staffing positions within many of its churches. The Bishop's Task Force on Diversity – Equity began its work in late 2019 to recommend action, gather resources, and promote a greater recognition of the gifts and talents of all God's children. The task force is working to create systems and resources for local congregations, especially those in, or anticipating, staff and leadership transitions. Our hope is that by engaging these resources, the call and search committees of these congregations might broaden their vision, interview, welcome, and create healthy environments for individuals from a variety of backgrounds and communities. Furthermore, by engaging in this vital work, these congregations will inevitably become a more welcoming place for all God's people. As we gather best practices, we anticipate a general library of resources being made available to all congregations, as well as targeted recommendations to those involved in ministries related to leadership transitions, such as Interim Pastors, soon-to-be-retired pastors, and congregation call committees. We appreciate your prayers as we continue this effort.

Members of the Bishop's Task Force on Diversity-Equity-Inclusion:

Deacon Cheryl Erdmann (Bishop's representative); The Rev. Preston Fields (Chair); Miss Christina King; The Rev. Karen Norman Rees; The Rev. Mack Patrick (recorder); The Rev. Mike Thomas; The Rev. Miho Yasukawa