



Thank you for taking the time to learn about the ministry of Region 5 as you prepare for and engage in the business of your synod assembly. This synod joins with eleven other synods in Wisconsin, Upper Michigan, Iowa, and Illinois to form Region 5; one of the 9 regions across the ELCA. The ministry of region 5 is roughly divided into 3 categories: convening synod ministry leaders; accompaniment of those preparing to become pastors and deacons; and tending to archival records.

As a region, your synod bishop, staff, and other leaders gather with their colleagues from time to time throughout the year. These gatherings are a way for them to support and pray with one another; and to share their ideas, experience and expertise with one another in order to faithfully minister in your synod. The twelve bishops, along with the regional candidacy manager, make up a regional steering committee. With five bishop elections in 2020, region 5 will welcome a record number of new bishops to the steering committee in a single year. Their collegiality will be important in establishing great working partnerships for years to come. This year, the region 5 steering committee began a collaborative grants program and awarded two collaborative grants to support projects aimed at congregational vitality and leadership: Faithful Innovations Learning Communities project that includes the 6 synods in Wisconsin and the U.P.; and a Spanish Immersion Project, with partners in South-Central Synod of Wisconsin, the Greater Milwaukee Synod and the Caribbean Synod.

As candidacy and leadership manager for region 5, much of my work is spent working with synod candidacy committees. "Candidacy" is the term used to describe our process of forming and preparing people to serve as a pastor or deacon in the ELCA. Like the many faithful volunteers that serve on your synod candidacy committee, I am honored to meet our seminary students and explore with them how God is calling them to service in the world.

You have a part in raising up, nurturing, and sending those whom God calls into service as pastor and deacon. To that end, I commend to you a resource, "Called to Lead", available online at www.elca.org/resources/candidacy. This discernment guide is for those who are wondering about ministry as a pastor or deacon. As a leader in your congregation, it is also a resource for you as a helpful conversation tool when talking with people you know who have gifts for ministry in the ELCA. Building upon our calling as baptized people of God, readers of this guide will have the opportunity to explore gifts and abilities, as well as readiness to begin an intentional time of formation for ministry leadership.

As a region, we also share in the care of archival records. Region 5 archives are housed at Wartburg Theological Seminary in Dubuque, Iowa. Our archivist, Sue Dodd, collects records of and responds to inquiries concerning: synods, deceased rostered personnel, and dissolved congregations within region 5. This work both preserves institutional records and documents the historical record of the institution within the context of the larger world. Approximately 200 requests come in each year from individuals for information found in the region 5 archives. As congregations in the region make decisions to close, Sue is a resource to you in determining what records to save and how to transfer them to the archives.

Thank you for your synod's participation in this shared ministry and for the privilege to serve among you.

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