



NEWS AND MEDIA RELATIONS

These steps will help guide the synod's media outreach leading up to and immediately following the installation.

Much of this work may fall to the synod communicator. If your synod does not have a communication professional, assign someone to work directly with reporters. This colleague should be able to answer questions about the installation (and possibly the election), oversee and escort reporters and photographers, help arrange interviews with synod (and churchwide) leaders, offer any photography restrictions during the installation and more.

Two weeks prior to the installation

- Write a press release about the installation to distribute to all local news organizations – radio, television, newspapers and magazines. The news release should include the date, time and venue, as well as other information about who is participating in the service (e.g., guest preachers, etc.). You might consider including a quote from the bishop-elect.
- Share the press release via social media platforms and post it on the synod's website. Be sure to share the information with congregations, rostered leaders and related agencies and institutions of the synod.
- Make follow-up calls to all media outlets to arrange for the bishop-elect to do an interview with local reporters. This is an opportunity for the newly elected bishop to build a relationship with local media and set the stage for future stories about your synod.
- Arrange for a studio-quality color photograph of the bishop-elect in clerics and prepare a formal biography. These should be available both in print and electronic formats to be used for media opportunities, speaking engagements and other purposes during the bishop's service in this church.
- Feel free to contact the Public Relations team at the ELCA churchwide organization for interviewing tips, messaging and other media relations assistance.

At the time of the installation

Present reporters with a media kit that includes:

- the new bishop's biography
- a copy of the studio-quality photograph
- a copy of the sermon that will be preached at the installation or at a link to the text
- basic information about the synod - number of congregations, membership
- contact information for the synod communicator

Things to remember:

- Be flexible when planning so there is time before or after the service of installation for possible interviews and/or photographs with the new bishop. In some locations, it may make sense to schedule a news conference. Remember to include the presiding bishop in interviews whenever possible.
- Be clear about photography and video recording during the service of installation. Normally, no photographs should be taken during most of the worship service (and certainly no *flash* photography). At the time of the installation rite, assemble photographers in a predetermined location so that they can get quality photos of the moment without being intrusive or obstructing the view of people in the assembly (these are the photos that will appear in the newspaper).
- Reinforce the media's awareness that this is primarily a worship service and that flash photography or video recording distracts from the essence of the event. Ask them in advance to be mindful of the congregants and use no flash for photos or video.
- Keep a list of reporters and photographers that attend the installation. Follow up with a phone call or e-mail thanking them for their interest. Use this list to assist the bishop in the important work of meeting with local news reporters in the future.

After the installation

- The synod communicator or designated person should write a brief summary of the installation service and post the report with photographs on the synod's website. Use the story and photos in the synod/bishop's newsletter.
- It may be necessary to follow up with a reporter with answers that were not readily available at the time of the installation. Get back to the reporter as soon as possible. Reporters really appreciate people who can reliably help them do their work.
- Assemble a file of all photographs, news releases, the printed worship folder and other materials prepared for the installation. Include reports from local newspapers, as well. This information will be helpful for anniversary dates, retirements and for the next installation.
- Arrange for the new bishop to meet with local news editors and key reporters during their term. Retain contact information for reporters and provide reporters with synod contact information.

For additional assistance, contact:

Candice Hill Buchbinder
Public Relations Manager
Candice.HillBuchbinder@elca.org
800-638-3522, ext. 2877