



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

Prayer resources for synods preparing for bishop elections

Electing a bishop is one of the most important responsibilities in the life of a synod in the ELCA and a key responsibility of a synod assembly. As an election, it is a process governed by the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of the synod; however, it is also a call process. As such, it involves discernment, from the perspective both of individual potential nominees and of the synod as a whole. Thus, engaging in prayerful reflection and seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit are indispensable aspects of the process of nomination and election, regardless of the particular provisions in the synod's governing documents. The resources and prayers offered here may be used by individuals, congregations and gatherings in synods that are preparing to call a bishop.

Responsive Prayer

The prayer may begin with singing "Come and Fill Our Hearts" (Evangelical Lutheran Worship, 528) or another appropriate song or psalm.

The leader begins the dialogue

Come, Holy Spirit!

Come, Holy Spirit!

Come, breath of God and fill the minds and hearts of your people.

Come, Holy Spirit!

Come, fire of truth and kindle in us the flame of your love.

Come, Holy Spirit!

Come, font of wisdom, enlighten us and give us counsel and insight.

Come, Holy Spirit!

Come, leading spirit and guide our discerning.

Come, Holy Spirit!

Come, Holy Spirit!

Holy Spirit, come!

Silence is kept.

The leader concludes the silence with the following prayer.

Almighty God, you have given your Holy Spirit to the church to lead us into all truth. Bless with the Spirit's grace and presence the people of this synod (*name*) as we prepare to elect a bishop. Keep us steadfast in faith and united in love, that we may manifest your glory and prepare for the way of your kingdom; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

Prayers

The church

Gracious Father, we pray for your holy catholic church. Fill it with all truth and peace. Where it is corrupt, purify it; where it is in error, direct it; where in anything it is amiss, reform it; where it is right, strengthen it; where it is in need, provide for it; where it is divided, reunite it; for the sake of Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord.

The church

Almighty God, grant to your church your Holy Spirit and the wisdom which comes down from heaven, that your word may not be bound but have free course and be preached to the joy and edifying of Christ's holy people, that in steadfast faith we may serve you and in the confession of your name abide to the end; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Church unity

Most high and holy God, pour out upon us your one and unifying Spirit, and awaken in every confession of the whole church a holy hunger and thirst for unity in you; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Enlightenment of the Holy Spirit

God Almighty, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ: Grant us, we pray, to be grounded and settled in your truth by the coming of the Holy Spirit into our hearts. That which we know not, reveal; that which is wanting in us, fill up; that which we know, confirm; and keep us blameless in your service; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

O God, through water and the Holy Spirit you give us new birth, cleanse us from sin, and raise us to eternal life. Stir up in your people the gift of your Holy Spirit: the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord, the spirit of joy in your presence, both now and forever.

Those discerning a call

Almighty God, by the power of the Spirit you have knit your servants into the one body of your Son, Jesus Christ. Look with favor upon them as they discern a new call in Christ's name. Give them courage, patience, and vision; and strengthen us all in our Christian vocation of witness to the world and of service to others; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Voting members

Almighty God, giver of all good gifts, look on your church with grace and guide the minds of those who shall choose the bishop of this synod (*name*), that we may receive a faithful servant who will care for your people and equip us for our ministries; through Jesus Christ our Lord.¹

¹ From "Choosing a Bishop: Questions to Assist in Preparation," authorized and commended for use by The Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 1994.

Guidance

O God, you have called your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Scripture Readings

Exodus 3:1-12	<i>God calls Moses</i>
Numbers 27:12-23	<i>God's choice of Joshua</i>
1 Samuel 3	<i>God speaks to Samuel</i>
1 Samuel 16:1-13	<i>David anointed by Samuel</i>
Psalms 104:24-34, 35b	<i>Send forth your Spirit and renew the face of the earth (30)</i>
Psalms 139:1-18, 23-24	<i>Lord, you have searched me out; O Lord you know me (1)</i>
Luke 5:1-11	<i>Jesus Calls the first disciples</i>
Acts 1:15-26	<i>Matthias added to the disciples</i>
Acts 2:1-12	<i>Filled with the Spirit</i>
Romans 8:22-27	<i>Praying with the Spirit</i>
Ephesians 6:18-20	<i>Praying in the Spirit</i>
Jude 1:20-22	<i>Praying in the Spirit</i>

Hymns and Songs

ELW 178*	Hear Our Prayer
ELW 179	O Lord, Hear Our Prayer
ELW 180	The Spirit Intercedes for Us
ELW 395	Come, Holy Ghost, God and Lord
ELW 401	Gracious Spirit, Heed Our Pleading
ELW 403	Like the Murmur of the Dove's Song
ELW 406	Veni Sancte Spiritus <i>Holy Spirit, Come to Us</i>
ELW 407	O Living Breath of God <i>Soplo de Dios viviente</i>
ELW 528	Come and Fill Our Hearts <i>Confitemini Domino</i>
ELW 577, 578	Creator Spirit, Heavenly Dove
ELW 743	Now to the Holy Spirit Let Us Pray
ELW 751	O Lord, Hear My Prayer
ELW 752	Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying

* Numbers correspond to *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*

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