



July 28 – August 2
PHOENIX, ARIZONA



Possible Nominees Pre-Identified for Secretary of the ELCA

In February and March 2025, voting members were invited to pre-identify up to three individuals whom they believed could be possible nominees for secretary of the ELCA. The following individuals were identified and chose to submit paperwork to be publicly identified for this process. In completing the biographical form, respondents were asked to limit their response to each prompt to 200 words.

Mr. Kevin Anderson
The Rev. Peter Asplin
The Rev. Paul Erickson
Daniel Kirschbaum
Mr. David Lenz
The Rev. Tyler Rasmussen
The Rev. Matthew Riegel
The Rev. Rob Rose
Mr. Peter Severson
Mr. Josh Tatum
The Rev. Lamont Wells

Please note this is not a nomination process. This is a tool for voting members to have more information in advance of the 2025 Churchwide Assembly. Voting members are welcome to download or print this information in advance of the assembly. After the assembly passes the “Rules of Organization and Procedure” for the 2025 Churchwide Assembly on Monday, July 28, this document with the list of names will be removed from ELCA.org and the ELCA Churchwide Assembly Guide. The traditional ecclesiastical ballot will then be used for the secretary election. The above named persons may or may not be nominated on the first ballot of the process; additional persons may be nominated on the first ballot. The Spirit will be present. This process allows preparation while also being open to how the Spirit may move.

**Biographical Information for Possible Nominee
for Secretary of the ELCA**

Mr. Kevin Anderson

Current Employment: Self-employed federal tax consultant

Congregation of Membership: Good Shepherd Lutheran Church; Gaithersburg, Maryland

Date and Year of Ordination (if applicable):

Previous Employment:

BDO USA, LLP, Partner and Managing Director, National Tax Office (2007–2023)

Deloitte Tax, LLP, Partner, National Tax Office (1999–2006)

United States Department of the Treasury, Office of Tax Policy, Associate Tax Legislative Counsel and Attorney Advisor (1995–1998)

Foley & Lardner LLP, Tax Partner/Associate (1981–1995 and 1998–1999)

Education with Earned Degrees (with institutions and years, most recent first):

University of Michigan Law School, Juris Doctor (1981)

University of Wisconsin—Whitewater, Bachelor of Business Administration—Accounting (1976)

Current Board and Committee Membership:

ELCA Church Council, including Executive Committee, Chair of Legal and Constitutional Review Committee, and Audit Committee (2019–present)

Past Board and Committee Membership:

Resource Person, Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church (2023–2025)

Committee on Appeals (2015–2019)

Board of Trustees, Portico Benefit Services (2009–2015)

Committee of Hearing Officers (2007–2013)

Churchwide Assembly, Reference and Counsel Committee (2022)

Secretary, Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod (2014–2022)

Member, Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod Council (2003–2008)

President, Vice President, and Member, Congregation Council, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Gaithersburg, Maryland (2002–2007)

President and Member, Congregation Council, Memorial Lutheran Church, Glendale, Wisconsin (est. 1986–1989 and 1994–1995)

American Institute of Certified Public Accountants Tax Division, Tax Executive Committee and Chair, Vice Chair, and Immediate Past Chair, S Corporations Technical Resource Panel (2008–2025)

American Bar Association Section of Taxation, Council Director, Chair and Vice Chair of several committees, active member of others (1988–present)

Describe your process of discerning this potential call to serve as the next secretary.

I have sought increasing levels of responsibility and commitment in the church for over two decades since the completion of my government service and return to the private sector. Two of my most recent churchwide positions, first as a trustee of Portico Benefit Services and currently as a Church Council member, have given me important and detailed perspectives on the churchwide organization, its officers and staff, and its purpose and mission. In recognition of the leadership that I have demonstrated in various roles on the Church Council, including as Chair of the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee, a member of the Executive and Audit Committees, and the chair of a temporary committee to evaluate the Church Council's committee structure, I was asked if I would consider having my name to go forward through the pre-Assembly identification process and the subsequent Assembly nomination and election process. After considering my current professional and family circumstances and my commitment to (and love for) this work, we determined that I would be both willing and able to serve if called by the Assembly to be the secretary of this church.

What specific leadership skills, administrative experience and spiritual gifts do you believe you would bring to the office of secretary?

I hold professional licenses as both a lawyer and a certified public accountant and have developed and applied the skills from both professions in my government service and in my law firm and public accounting firm careers. In my volunteer service, I have sought to apply my professional skills and experiences to the questions at hand. This was particularly true for the work of the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee of the Church Council and my role as Synod Secretary. Whether the challenge is to draft a resolution, prepare agendas and minutes, recommend and draft amendments to constitutions, bylaws, or continuing resolutions, or interpret the language of existing governing provisions, legal skills are particularly useful. Our governing documents are not as complex as the tax code, but they do require mastery of extensive amounts of detail and an awareness of the relationships between different provisions. Board-level volunteer service (principally Church Council, Portico Board of Trustees, Synod Council, ABA Tax Section Council, and AICPA Tax Executive Committee) has allowed me to see all facets of an organization, including its finances, leadership transitions, mission, and strategy. I even took a college course in parliamentary procedure after all of my degree requirements had been satisfied!

What is your concept of the primary role of the secretary of the ELCA?

The secretary is an important part of the leadership of the church as a whole, and the churchwide organization in particular. The role is not limited to the matters set forth in the bylaws under 13.41. (minutes, rosters, reports, archives, legal services and risk management, interpretations of the governing provisions, meeting planning, etc.). In addition to these specified responsibilities, the secretary is, to name a few, (a) a member of the Church Council, its Executive Committee, and its Legal and Constitutional Review Committee; (b) a member of the Conference of Bishops; (c) a member of the Administrative Team; (d) an advisor to the boards of trustees of Portico Benefit Services and Augsburg Fortress, as the presiding bishop's representative; and (e) the churchwide representative to several synod assemblies during each assembly season. This is an expansive way of saying that the role of the secretary is not limited to administrative and record-keeping functions. Rather, the role requires an extensive knowledge of all three expressions of the church and the various offices, teams, and units of the churchwide organization. The secretary is a vital representative of the church wherever the secretary may be present and should be keenly aware of matters involving the whole church.

Describe how your current and past board and committee membership experiences or previous congregation, synod, churchwide activities or community-related activities have significantly impacted you and informed your vision for serving as secretary.

I have held leadership positions in all three expressions of the church, beginning as the President of two different congregations, continuing with service on our Synod Council and eventually becoming the Synod Secretary, and culminating in several churchwide positions. These experiences have given me important insights into this role. One important aspect of the work of the Office of the Secretary in the next three-year period is to act upon the recommendations of the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church, as modified and adopted by the Church Council at its April 2025 meeting. Having served on the Church Council for six years, on the Executive Committee for three years (where the recommendations from the Commission were carefully considered and forwarded to the full Church Council), and as a resource person for the Commission itself, I have been a part of many of the discussions that informed the Church Council actions. The work to be done includes the Task Force on Interdependence and Purpose (of which the secretary will be a member), collaboration with full-communion partners regarding dispute resolution processes, and providing staff support from the Office of the Secretary to the Committee on Appeals in connection with synod consultation committee candidates and skills.

Biographical Information for Possible Nominee for Secretary of the ELCA

Pastor Peter Asplin

Current Employment: Assistant to the Bishop, Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA

Congregation of Membership: St. Andrew Lutheran, Pittsburgh (Shadyside), PA

Date and Year of Ordination (if applicable): 2007-11-10

Previous Employment:

Pastor, Bethlehem, Scenery Hill, PA (2007–2017)

Education with Earned Degrees (with institutions and years, most recent first):

MDiv (Trinity Lutheran Sem. 2004–2007, Pittsburgh Theological Sem. 2002–2004)

BA (Gustavus Adolphus Coll. 1987–1991)

Current Board and Committee Membership:

Region 8 FCTE Planning Team

WV-WMd/SWPA Synods Candidacy Committee (staff)

Past Board and Committee Membership:

Lutheran Seniorlife Board (2014–2017)

SWPA Synod Youth Convo Cttee (2007–2016)

SWPA Youth Committee (Chair, 2012–2015)

Describe your process of discerning this potential call to serve as the next secretary.

When I heard Secretary Rothmeyer was retiring at the end of her current term, I thought about who might be the right person for that call, but left the question for voting members to worry about and got on with ministry to the Synod. In November I had the chance to chat with Bishop Barb Collins about the question. During our discussion, we talked about the way in which congregations are the core of Gospel ministry in the church—where grace is seen and heard, tasted and felt—where God’s mission goes out into God’s world. After that discussion, I was shocked to find that the Holy Spirit seemed to be inviting me to consider the call as Secretary! I found myself contemplating how the office, and the constitution, is a help to congregations in every day ministry, reminding everyone of purpose and meaning. The constitutions are not just for when things go wrong! I continued to talk through these ideas with Bishop Kusserow, my colleague Pastor Melissa Stoller, with my spiritual director and my wife. As I’ve widened my discernment, I’ve continued to feel support from colleagues and friends to see what the Holy Spirit might be up to!

What specific leadership skills, administrative experience and spiritual gifts do you believe you would bring to the office of secretary?

One of the realities of synod leadership and parish leadership, is that good leaders stand in the midst of turmoil and respond rather than react. As synod staff, I get to be in rooms full of sometimes angry, sometimes fearful, but always passionate leaders, working with them to find paths through challenges. Remaining calm, while listening carefully; being compassionate, while speaking the truth; being careful, while remaining open to creativity are skills I’ve honed over the last eight years. In my work at the synod, I’ve learned to value the wisdom in the ELCA’s constitutions, and to deeply value our ELCA’s commitment to involving the people of God in the organization of our life together. On a more practical level, I spent much of my college and early married life working as clerical staff in law offices, from government offices to little real estate groups to huge multi-national firms. I learned a lot about how to think and write clearly from the men and women with window offices in those organizations, and have applied those skills to reading and improving parish agreements and interim pastor agreements in the SWPA Synod.

What is your concept of the primary role of the secretary of the ELCA?

As I’ve discerned openness to this call, I’ve spoken with churchwide staff, bishops, and Church Council members. All depend on the ELCA Secretary and staff to help adhere to the constitutions and policies of our Church (e.g. the

Manual on the Maintenance of the Roster). As a leader, the Secretary works with a dedicated staff handling a broad set of responsibilities: The office organizes and records minutes of all kinds of boards and committees. The staff engages in research on the breadth of our Church's ministry. Together, the staff responds to legal and constitutional questions from all over our churchwide organization and synods. Of course, organizing Churchwide Assembly is a key responsibility of the Office of the Secretary and our gathering is very much due to their efforts. Finally, the Secretary serves as a member of the Presiding Bishop's core leadership team. Having served on a solid, faithful team of leaders for the last eight years, I know how important that is. My hope and prayer is that this team (and the whole Church) will gather not just to work, but to pray in confidence that the God the Holy Spirit is guiding and directing our individual and corporate efforts.

Describe how your current and past board and committee membership experiences or previous congregation, synod, churchwide activities or community-related activities have significantly impacted you and informed your vision for serving as secretary.

I've served on the staff of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod since 2017. In that role I've answered countless questions from congregations and pastors about the constitutions, polity and governance issues. Regularly I find myself using the constitution to talk about what it means to be church together, and how congregations can function well. I have worked regularly as a boundaries trainer for our Synod. I organize our annual Congregation Council training, including arranging workshops and worship, and event management. One core responsibility is to serve as staff for the candidacy process for our joint candidacy committee with WV-WMd. I took on the added responsibility of the mobility (call) process in our synod after we reduced the size of the called staff in the Bishop's office. I'm confident that my skills, developed in faithfully, confidentially, and transparently guiding those two particular processes of the Synod, will carry over in multiple ways to the work of the Secretary of the ELCA. Additionally, in the last eight years on synod staff, I have learned, like everyone at every level of our Church, to work with less and yet still accomplish good, Gospel-centered ministry, for people, pastors, congregations, synods and the world God loves.

**Biographical Information for Possible Nominee
for Secretary of the ELCA**

Bishop Paul Erickson

Current Employment: Bishop, Greater Milwaukee Synod

Congregation of Membership: Jackson Park Lutheran Church, Milwaukee WI

Date and Year of Ordination (if applicable): 1989-08-19

Previous Employment:

Director of Agora, St. Paul, MN 2014–2016

Director for Evangelical Mission, Saint Paul Area Synod, 2008–2014

Pastor, Augustana Lutheran Church, West St. Paul, MN, 2003–2008

Pastor, Fatih/Santa Fe Lutheran Church, Milwaukee, WI, 1993–2003

Pastor, First Lutheran Church of Logan Square, Chicago, IL, 1989–1993

Education with Earned Degrees (with institutions and years, most recent first):

Doctor of Ministry, Luther Seminary, St. Paul, MN, 2012

Master of Divinity, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, 1989

Bachelor of Arts, Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, MN, 1983

Current Board and Committee Membership:

Global Refuge Board of Directors, 2021–present

Carthage College Board of Trustees, 2017–present

Interfaith Conference of Greater Milwaukee Executive Committee, 2021–present

Past Board and Committee Membership:

ELCA Task Force on On Leave from Call and Specialized Ministry, 2023–25

ELCA Task Force Addressing Disciplinary Concerns of Leaders of Color, 2022–2023

WeRaise Foundation Board of Directors, 2017–2019

Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan Board of Directors, 2017–18

Describe your process of discerning this potential call to serve as the next secretary.

I have served in a variety of roles in my 35+ years of ordained ministry, and I have seen the importance of good governance to facilitate the growth and health of vibrant communities. I often have found myself answering questions about constitutions and the roster manual, and several folks have encouraged me to consider this office. I love serving as a synod bishop and will happily continue to do so if I am not elected, but I recognize that this is a critical time in our life together, and this position can play a significant role as we live into God's future. I feel called to use my gifts to guide the governance of this church to strengthen our work to build the beloved community and engage in God's mission of justice, love, and reconciliation.

What specific leadership skills, administrative experience and spiritual gifts do you believe you would bring to the office of secretary?

I have been blessed to experience life and ministry in a wide variety of contexts, and I have accompanied over a dozen new start ministries and dozens of established congregations seeking renewal. Through it all, I have sought to ask the question, "What is God calling you to be and do, and how can the administrative structures and resources of the church help you?" In our synod, we hired an outside firm to conduct an Authentic Diversity audit, from which we developed a strategic plan and have dedicated staff time and financial resources to implement the structural and behavioral changes that will help us live into the vision and mission we proclaim. In my service on two recent task forces in the ELCA, I have helped create changes in policy that respond to the challenges experienced by folks seeking On Leave or Retired status, and I have worked to create a synod policy on Discrimination and Bias, establishing a process for folks to receive the accompaniment needed when they experience such behavior. Through it all, I have sought to live and lead in alignment with our synod's core values: curiosity, courage, compassion, and collaboration.

What is your concept of the primary role of the secretary of the ELCA?

I have often used the analogy that the administrative structures and governance policies of the church are like the skeleton in the body of Christ. Largely hidden, they provide the structure and stability the body needs in order to move. The flesh and blood of the body, the ministries and leaders and members, need this structure in order to do what God is calling them to do. Then again, if all we have is the skeleton, we are like the Valley of Dry Bones in Ezekiel, and there is no life. The Office of the Secretary, then, is charged with stewarding the governance resources of this church so that the ministries of this church can be properly supported and sustained, always keeping in mind that the mission comes first, and the structures and resources need to be aligned with and in support of this mission.

Describe how your current and past board and committee membership experiences or previous congregation, synod, churchwide activities or community-related activities have significantly impacted you and informed your vision for serving as secretary.

I have come to see leadership through the lens of stewardship, working to make sure that everything and everyone works together to fulfill the core mission of the organization. Paul writes, “Think of us in this way, as servants of Christ and stewards of God’s mysteries. Moreover, it is required of stewards that they should be found trustworthy.” (1 Cor 4:1-2) During my time serving as a bishop and in my recent service on several ELCA task forces, it has become clear that many have lost trust in the leaders and structures of this church, having experienced significant harm. We need to recognize and repent for the ways that the policies and patterns of our common life have gotten in the way of the Gospel being clearly expressed and fully experienced. The work of rebuilding trust is long and slow, and it begins by working to ensure that our actions align with our values, and when we discover this isn’t the case, we roll up our sleeves with creativity and courage to change what we can in the hopes of mending what has been broken.

**Biographical Information for Possible Nominee
for Secretary of the ELCA**

Daniel Kirschbaum

Current Employment: Senior Director, Young Adult Communities Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Congregation of Membership: New Heights Lutheran Church, Mazomanie, WI

Date and Year of Ordination (if applicable):

Previous Employment:

Rainbow Trail Lutheran Camp, Retreat Director
Abide Administrator, ELCA

Education with Earned Degrees (with institutions and years, most recent first):

B.S. Community and Nonprofit Leadership - University of Wisconsin-Madison (2017)

Current Board and Committee Membership:

Vice President - Church Council (Vision Team) - New Heights Lutheran Church
Public Message Working Group - Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Regional Network Coordinators - Latin America & the Caribbean and North America Young Adult Networks

Past Board and Committee Membership:

North America Youth Representative - Global Young Reformers Steering Committee - Lutheran World Federation (2021–2023)
Member - Youth Pre-Assembly Global Planning Committee Member - Lutheran World Federation (2022–2023)
Proxy Board Member - Lutheran Outdoor Ministries (2023)
Rocky Mountain Synod Youth Leadership Advisory Member (2019–2020)

Describe your process of discerning this potential call to serve as the next secretary.

Since receiving invitation to move forward with the pre-identification process, I have taken significant time in prayer and personal reflection, and consultation with mentors, and friends. Amidst feeling uncertainty, doubt, and, most of all, overwhelming gratitude, I encountered a deep sense of call. I have directly and sincerely assessed my own relationship to power and my willingness to dwell in humility. I believe that my commitment to the flourishing of our entire Church, at all intersections of belovedness, is what we need right now. Reflecting on my time at the Churchwide Organization, I am particularly proud of how I have led the building of a team, and re-building of structures, which have resulted in the growth of the pathways for young adults to encounter affirming and formation-oriented faith communities. I have spent much time encouraging prophetic young leaders to step into their own giftedness, and even more time listening to visions of flourishing community through the powerful witness of Christ that young people and people on the margins have for our Church. Through my process of discernment, I have come to believe that I have the gifts and relationships to serve our church rooted in this shared vision of flourishing.

What specific leadership skills, administrative experience and spiritual gifts do you believe you would bring to the office of secretary?

Without the presence of care, compassion, and empathy, our church could become a tool of Empire. “In holy disruption” has become a unifying sentiment for many young leaders in and near our church, and it is with theological preparation for our own perspectives to be challenged that I would continue to lead. I am convinced that current and future leaders of this church must be willing to navigate disruption and uncertainty. I believe in my ability to connect our governance practices and organizational structures to our goals and vision from across this church. Leading with integrity and vision, I have ample practice paving new pathways within bureaucratic processes that center real people, and real experiences from many perspectives. I currently manage workflows on local, regional, national, and global scales, and I have passion and experience in evaluation and measurement. I have led small and large teams of full-time employees, and regularly develop and maintain systems for project development and implementation. Most of all, I love to imagine possibilities in community. I am so excited about where God is calling us next.

What is your concept of the primary role of the secretary of the ELCA?

As a church, we're called to embody Christ. The organization and institution of the ELCA is one mechanism that we have developed to help us do that. The primary role of the secretary is to guide our leadership and decision-making bodies in the most liberative and gospel-centered understanding of our governing documents. This position has the incredible ability to advise the use of our human-made institutions and to either release us to our divine mission or to allow those same institutions to be what prevents us from living in the way that Jesus commands of us—to love God, to love and serve our neighbor, and to grow disciples. As an officer of the Church Council, a member of the Conference of Bishops, and a staff person of the Churchwide organization, the secretary can, alongside the presiding bishop, act as a bridge of relationship, information, and feedback that can allow our three expressions to more fully realize our interconnectedness. The secretary of this church supports us in accessing our own role in stewarding the ways we affirm our shared relationship. The constitution of this church is an outward reflection of how we've committed to living this mystery of faith together.

Describe how your current and past board and committee membership experiences or previous congregation, synod, churchwide activities or community-related activities have significantly impacted you and informed your vision for serving as secretary.

The last six years have provided ample opportunity to understand the need for learning from our traditions while actively listening for the Holy Spirit's voice to lead us into new possibilities. Through congregations, synod planning committees, and in national and global expressions of our tradition, I have accompanied many of our leaders, including laity, deacons, pastors, and bishops, through incredible challenges: political division, increasingly secularization, shrinking engagement in traditional models of ministry, and feelings of resource scarcity. I have had experience leading systemic reform alongside powerful young leaders at a global scale, yet, it is in my rural-Wisconsin home congregation that I find my rootedness in leadership and vision casting. Our once small multi-point parish has spent more than 10 years filtering our decisions through the question: "Who's not here yet?" Evident in the 27 new mission partners being welcomed this spring alone, this challenging work, filled with grief and letting go, has only drawn us closer to loving our neighbor faithfully. Nourished by the ways I have experienced and accompanied New Heights Lutheran Church, my vision for service is rooted in resurrection hope for what is yet to come.

**Biographical Information for Possible Nominee
for Secretary of the ELCA**

Mr. David Lenz

Current Employment: Managing Partner, Schneider Bell

Congregation of Membership: Messiah Lutheran Church, Lyndhurst, Ohio

Date and Year of Ordination (if applicable):

Previous Employment:

Associate Attorney 2006–2012, Partner 2013–2019, Managing Partner 2020–present, all with same law firm

Education with Earned Degrees (with institutions and years, most recent first):

Juris Doctor, Michael Moritz College of Law at The Ohio State University 2006

B.S. in Economics and B.A. in Political Science, The Ohio State University 2003

Current Board and Committee Membership:

ELCA Church Council

ELCA Church Council Legal and Constitution Review Committee

Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church

Northeastern Ohio Synod Constitution Committee

ELCA Candidacy Leadership Development Working Group

Past Board and Committee Membership:

Northeastern Ohio Synod Secretary

Northeastern Ohio Synod Council Young Adult Member

President, Advent Lutheran Church, Mentor, Ohio

Daily Dose of Reading (early childhood literacy organization, Cleveland, Ohio)

Describe your process of discerning this potential call to serve as the next secretary.

The ELCA Candidacy Manual speaks in terms of internal call and external call to ministry, and I am viewing this process through that lens. Through my time serving on the ELCA Church Council and related committees I have received significant affirmation of my skills with legal documents, calm temperament, and gifts for listening and problem solving as being appropriate for service as ELCA Secretary. The sense of external call is rather strong. The sense of internal call is far weaker. I am a licensed attorney who practices trusts and estates and nonprofit organization law and serves as the managing partner of a 33-lawyer firm in Cleveland, Ohio. I have spent 25 years of secondary and professional education and work experience building my career in that line, and this would be a complete departure from my home city and career trajectory. Further, my wife and rising 3rd and 6th grade children are not certain they feel called to uproot their sense of community. I will continue internal discernment between the time of this writing (late April) and the start of the Assembly through reflection, prayer, and conversations with my family and other trusted, faithful people.

What specific leadership skills, administrative experience and spiritual gifts do you believe you would bring to the office of secretary?

I bring a solid understanding of the ELCA's governing documents through over a decade of experience on the Northeastern Ohio Synod Constitution Committee and 6 years on the Church Council's Legal and Constitutional Review Committee. I have served for over 5 years as the managing partner of a civil-practice law firm in Cleveland, Ohio, leading an organization of approximately 65 people but needing to work to build consensus among 19 co-owners to achieve meaningful change. I bring gifts of listening and insightful action in church matters. I do not believe I have all of the answers, but I believe I have skills to help people with potential answers find the best ways to navigate complex ELCA governance and polity to implement them. Some people have brilliant ideas and insights for reform of our church but do not understand our complex governance well enough to be able to work effectively toward change. I have become relatively fluent in the system, and I understand how to help reform it. I believe I bring a

balance of both governance and relationship skill with joyful, hopeful creativity to help our church join where God is doing new things.

What is your concept of the primary role of the secretary of the ELCA?

The primary role of the Secretary of the ELCA is to help ensure good governance in the church. This is accomplished through thorough understanding of the governing documents and effort to ensure they are fairly and uniformly applied and interpreted and appropriately updated to meet the needs of an evolving church and society. The Secretary also oversees collection of information about our church and making it available to others to see trends and learn new ways of being church. While maintenance of good order in our current systems is important, we also recognize a need for the ELCA to become a much more adaptive organization. It is not enough to be a keeper of the institution. The Secretary of the ELCA and his or her team have to be able to recognize places where God is doing a new thing, recognize how to bring new forms of ministry and gospel proclamation into our church, and determine how to do so while causing minimal disruption to other structures that are working well. It is not an easy task.

Describe how your current and past board and committee membership experiences or previous congregation, synod, churchwide activities or community-related activities have significantly impacted you and informed your vision for serving as secretary.

My work with colleagues on the ELCA Church Council and the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church and review of information from listening sessions have given me a much greater perspective of the joys and challenges in our church. For one example, it has shown me how important advancing diversity in the ELCA is to so many people who have felt marginalized in our church for so long. It has shown me ways that our polity is perceived to and, in fact has, enabled marginalizing behaviors. The Secretary is a primary gate-keeper for polity and governance adjustments. I applaud the openness with which the current Office of the Secretary has addressed certain significant governance questions during my term on Church Council, but I know that there are more and bigger changes desired by many in this Church to better position it to proclaim the gospel in today's world. If I am elected Secretary, I would hope to address potential reforms not from a starting point of "How can we protect the institution as it is?" but rather a spirit of "How can we make necessary changes happen as effectively as possible?"

**Biographical Information for Possible Nominee
for Secretary of the ELCA**

Pastor Tyler Rasmussen

Current Employment: Pastor, Mt Zion Lutheran Church, Wauwatosa, WI (2020–present)

Congregation of Membership: Mt Zion Lutheran Church, Wauwatosa, WI

Date and Year of Ordination (if applicable): 2012-08-26

Previous Employment:

Pastor, Trinity Lutheran Church, Coopersburg, PA (2012–2019)

Education with Earned Degrees (with institutions and years, most recent first):

M.Div. (Lutheran School Theology Chicago, 2012)

B.A. in Music Performance (Iowa State University, 2007)

Current Board and Committee Membership:

Conference Dean (Greater Milwaukee Synod, 2024–present)

RIC Ministry Team Lead (Greater Milwaukee Synod, present)

Past Board and Committee Membership:

Constitution Committee (Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod)

Synod Executive Committee (Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod)

Synod Council (Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod)

Human Growth and Development Advisory Committee Chair (Wauwatosa, WI)

MICAH Religious Leaders Caucus (advocacy group, Milwaukee, 2020–present)

Describe your process of discerning this potential call to serve as the next secretary.

Both in 2019 and 2025, multiple colleagues identified me for this call. They believe I have the gifts, including the knowledge and wisdom, to serve as Secretary. I believe the Spirit works particularly through the voices of those around us, and I trust these voices. I know I have many gifts that would be of benefit in this role (see the next question). At the same time, I will admit: my spirit remains on the fence about this role. I believe the ELCA has so many gifts, so much potential, and is of vital importance to the ministry of Jesus Christ in the United States. At the same time, the ways in which we are failing as the ELCA, the ways in which we are crumbling from underneath (following patterns the whole Church in America faces)—I'm not sure the position of Secretary is where I can best serve to address the problems of people leaving the faith, youth not being trained in discipleship, and the disconnection between the three interdependent expressions, particularly between the ministry of Churchwide and congregations. I may be wrong; it may be exactly where I am needed. I will trust the Spirit to guide us.

What specific leadership skills, administrative experience and spiritual gifts do you believe you would bring to the office of secretary?

As a solo pastor for 13 years, I have learned best practices in administration, writing policies, and financial accounting. Also, I am particularly aware of the needs of congregations and the weaknesses in the relationship between Churchwide and our congregational expressions. As a member of Beta Sigma Psi National Lutheran Fraternity, I was thoroughly trained in Roberts' Rules of Order. Having served as a synod constitution officer, I have a familiarity with the ELCA Constitution, particularly the Model Constitution for Congregations and have written about this at ergofabulous.org/model/. Having served on a synod Executive Committee, I got to participate in handling congregational and ministerial disfunction. As a theologian, I am particularly interested in the theology of repentance and forgiveness (<https://ergofabulous.org/reconcile-screen.pdf>), a theology central to the Discipline processes within this Church. As a fan of constitutional law, I recognize how a constitution can shape and guide a people, as well as how it may be violated or broken. As a former computer scientist, I have a sense of how technology may be used to enhance the work of this Church. As a genealogist, I understand the importance of accurately recording our history.

What is your concept of the primary role of the secretary of the ELCA?

The Secretary is the primary interpreter of the ELCA Constitution and the one who ensures this Church abides by and fulfills the Constitution; this is the primary function of the Secretary at any moment. As a side note, I believe the Secretary could do a lot to make it easier for congregations to work with the Model Constitution for Congregations; the process is unnecessarily difficult at this time. All that said, I believe we need a Secretary whose focus is collaborating with the Presiding Bishop on building up the church of the future and, within the role of Secretary, providing the three expressions of this Church with the tools they need to function as organizations (i.e Risk Management) so that they can focus on doing ministry, helping the three expressions collaborate in an interdependent fashion (i.e. Synod Relations), and supporting the Presiding Bishop in any other way necessary to building up the Beloved Community of saints that call themselves members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Describe how your current and past board and committee membership experiences or previous congregation, synod, churchwide activities or community-related activities have significantly impacted you and informed your vision for serving as secretary.

One of the important realities I bring is my life-experience has built a variety of relationships in the Beloved Community—from rural ministry in Iowa and Pennsylvania to urban ministry in Chicago to suburban ministry in Dallas and Milwaukee (Wauwatosa), along with the racial, ethnic, sexual/gender, and economic diverse experiences and connections that came with ministry in those locations. In a Church for all people, I think it's important that I've done ministry with and built relationships with a variety of people from a variety of backgrounds. That said, the most impactful activity forming my vision of Secretary or, honestly, Churchwide in general, is my experience as a congregational pastor. I know Churchwide engages in important ministry, and I am a Lutheran partly because of the amazing things we do as a Churchwide body, but the ministry of our Churchwide expression has become disconnected from our congregation members. My vision is for an ELCA where our members are more energized than any other Christian you've ever met to share the good news of what Christ is doing through our Church because they are floored every week as they discover another way we are making this world a better place.

**Biographical Information for Possible Nominee
for Secretary of the ELCA**

Bishop Matthew Riegel

Current Employment: Bishop WV-WMD Synod

Congregation of Membership: St. Paul Lutheran Church, Morgantown, WV

Date and Year of Ordination (if applicable): 1994-07-09

Previous Employment:

Chaplain, Lutheran Campus Ministry at West Virginia University
pastor, Trinity-Mt. Calvary Shared Lutheran Ministry
national park ranger (seasonal), multiple USNPS units
field tech, JMA
seminarian intern, Trinity Lutheran Church, Bedford, PA
computer tech, JMA
EMT, Houck Ambulance.

Education with Earned Degrees (with institutions and years, most recent first):

S.T.M., LTSG '11
M.Div., LTSG '94
B.A., Gettysburg College '87

Current Board and Committee Membership:

Institutional Review Board, West Virginia University
Bishops' Academy
Lutheran-Anglican-Roman Catholic-United Methodist Conference of WV
Faith & Order Commission, West Virginia Council of Churches
Lutheran Historical Society of the Mid-Atlantic
Mountainside Baroque
Camp Luther WV

Past Board and Committee Membership:

Social Statement Task Force/Civic Life and Faith
Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church
Board of Directors, Lutheran Theological Seminary, Gettysburg
Committee on Appeals

Describe your process of discerning this potential call to serve as the next secretary.

The call to Secretary of the ELCA is discerned by the Churchwide Assembly; it is an example of a mediate call. Since only the Churchwide Assembly can issue the mediate call, I, as a potential candidate am in no position to discern it. I can, however, understand what is involved in the office and have had the opportunity to work with the Office of the Secretary and observe and appreciate its operation. I believe that I have skills sufficient to that work, an knowledge of polity and history that would support the church, a willingness to learn more in order to fulfill the duties of the office, and a willingness to serve. I have been asked by others to consider the office, but the assembly's discernment is the only discernment that matters.

What specific leadership skills, administrative experience and spiritual gifts do you believe you would bring to the office of secretary?

A knowledge of the history of Lutheran polity in America and historic Lutheran ecclesiology. Knowledge of our current governing documents. Knowledge of parliamentary procedure and theory. An ability to critique extant systems and structures, conceptualize alternatives, and analyze risks and benefits. Conscious ethical analysis and decision

making. A desire to assist and support people in doing the work before them. A conviction that the temporalities of the church should be aligned to support the spiritual ministry of the church.

What is your concept of the primary role of the secretary of the ELCA?

The governing documents of the ELCA outline the duties of the secretary and the Office of the Secretary. Oversight of the work of that office is the indispensable role of the secretary, and this must be done faithfully even if nothing else is done, lest several critical systems of the ELCA collapse. Beyond this, however, the secretary is the institutional memory of the ELCA and the chief facilitator of the polity functions of the ELCA. The secretary advises—a work that engages both memory of the past and imagination for the future—the leadership and the deliberative organs of the church so that all things may be done in good order, not for the sake of order in and of itself, but for the sake the right proclamation of the Word so that people might, through the work of the Holy Spirit, have faith in Jesus Christ, be enlightened by the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and persevere unto eternal life.

Describe how your current and past board and committee membership experiences or previous congregation, synod, churchwide activities or community-related activities have significantly impacted you and informed your vision for serving as secretary.

I have frequently served on the bylaws committees of the organizations in which I have volunteered and am often asked to advise other organizations on polity and procedure. I have more than 40 years of experience with polity and procedure for civic, scholastic, and ecclesiastical organizations. Chairing a WVU IRB, a board that protects the well-being and rights of human research subjects, I learned that helping others be compliant for the sake of a common good accomplishes more than trying to beat them into compliance. The same is true with polity. We have rules for reasons. Helping others understand those reasons advances a spirit of cooperation. At the same time, I've been in organizations in desperate need of a change in the rules. Knowing the difference is the key. I've learned that one must listen for wisdom, that decision-making benefits from sober reflection, and that initial judgments, when wrong, require transparent acknowledgement and correction. Prior to becoming bishop, I served as one of the parliamentarians for my synod since my first Synod Assembly. I've provided several parliamentary resources for my synod and continue to update them in the belief that we should provide tools for the people to own their polity and practice good procedure.

**Biographical Information for Possible Nominee
for Secretary of the ELCA**

Pastor Rob Rose

Current Employment: Florida-Bahamas Synod

Congregation of Membership: Grace Lutheran Church, Tampa, FL

Date and Year of Ordination (if applicable): 2016-03-12

Previous Employment:

2015–2020 Calvary Lutheran Church ELCA, Co-Pastor
2005–2015 Bay Hope Church, UMC, Local Pastor
2009–2011 Cornerstone Family Ministries Reorganization CEO (Concurrent with Bay Hope)
2003–2005 BayBridge Solutions, VP of Sales and Marketing
2000–2003 Horizon Marketing Group, Inc., Director of Marketing
1996–2000 Advent Lutheran Church, ELCA, Children, Youth and Family Minister
1992–1996 Trinity Lutheran Church, ELCA, Senior High Youth Minister

Education with Earned Degrees (with institutions and years, most recent first):

12/2025 Doctorate of Business Administration, Indiana Wesleyan University (anticipated)
2010 Graduate Certificate, University of Tampa, Nonprofit Management and Innovation
2008 Master's, Asbury Theological Seminary (Lutheran work done with LSTC)
1990 Bachelor's, University of South Florida

Current Board and Committee Membership:

Lutheran Services of Florida, Board Member
The Dwelling Church, Treasurer, NC Synod
Synod-Parish Deacons Oversight Committee, FB Synod

Past Board and Committee Membership:

2018–2022 FB Synod Candidacy Committee
2018–2020 FB Synod Audit Committee
2017–2020 FB Synod Assembly Planning Committee
2012–2016 One Ball, One Village, Founder and Board Member
2011–2015 Hillsborough County School Special Needs Committee, Parent Representative
2008–2010 Autism Speaks Walk Board, Chairman
2008–2009 Nonprofit Leadership Center of Tampa Bay, Marketing Board
2007–2008 Metropolitan Ministries, Volunteer Homeless Counselor

Describe your process of discerning this potential call to serve as the next secretary.

Discerning the call to serve as the next ELCA secretary has been a challenging and humbling experience. The scope of this position is daunting and has resulted in several nights when I have been awake at 3 am. The responsibilities of this position, the intricate nature of the church's present situation, and the sacred trust it carries evoke a profound respect within me. Honestly, my initial reaction was to respond with a "No". I approached God many times in prayer and struggled with understanding what I should do. I also pursued the guidance of mentors and peers, including my bishop, who provided both spiritual perspectives and practical advice. My wife and I talked for hours debating the impact this would have on our family. We discussed how it could impact our adult sons, both of whom have autism and live with us, her career, and our shared goals. Her elegance and faith have been crucial to this journey. I couldn't make this move without her support. What surfaced was not a grand confirmation, but an openness to yield to the Spirit. I have come to believe that when we are most aware of our limitations, God can do the deepest work. If entrusted with this responsibility, I would serve not from a place of ambition, but from a place of deep love for the church and a desire to be faithful in this season of change and opportunity for the ELCA.

What specific leadership skills, administrative experience and spiritual gifts do you believe you would bring to the office of secretary?

I would offer to the secretary's office a depth of leadership experience, administrative skill, and spiritual grounding developed through my current position as Assistant to the Bishop for Administration and many years of pastoral and professional leadership. I have overseen legal and insurance issues, coordinated synod assemblies and council sessions, managed constitutional revisions, spearheaded strategic planning efforts, and implemented innovation in various settings. In past leadership positions, I have managed substantial budgets, overseen large teams, and navigated complex organizational change with integrity and transparency. From a spiritual perspective, I view leadership as a spiritual practice of devoted stewardship and service. I strive to approach administration, strategic discernment, and crisis management in a Christ-like manner and as an essential ministry to the church. Prayer, seeking guidance from wise advisors, and being open to listening have grounded my approach to leadership. I think my abilities in discernment, strategic planning, and empathetic communication would help the church remain both resilient and nimble during this period of swift change. Above all, I would seek to preserve what is uniquely Lutheran while fostering the flexibility required to proclaim the Gospel in new contexts, trusting that the Holy Spirit continues to renew and guide Christ's church.

What is your concept of the primary role of the secretary of the ELCA?

The main responsibility of the secretary in the ELCA is to act as a guardian of the church's constitutional and organizational integrity while promoting the church's faithful ability to adapt to a rapidly changing world. Martin Luther reminds us, "A Christian is a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none. A Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject to all" (*The Freedom of a Christian*, 1520). The secretary's position reflects the challenge of providing faithful leadership that safeguards the distinct character of the Lutheran confession, while also being attentively responsive to the church's needs as it interacts with a fast-changing world. This attitude of continuous reform ("*ecclesia semper reformanda*") should inform the work of the secretary. The secretary must be agile, interpreting and enforcing our governing documents with insight, precision, and courage. This encompasses guiding the presiding bishop, synods, and congregations on constitutional issues, managing the records of the church's deliberations and decisions, and ensuring that new challenges are addressed with fidelity and innovation. Safeguarding what is distinctly Lutheran involves clinging to the freedom of the Gospel and the church's confessions, while also exploring new frameworks and methods for being church.

Describe how your current and past board and committee membership experiences or previous congregation, synod, churchwide activities or community-related activities have significantly impacted you and informed your vision for serving as secretary.

My involvement on boards and committees in church, nonprofit, and civic areas has greatly influenced my grasp of governance, accountability, and adaptive leadership—core principles I would bring to the office of secretary. As an active member of the Board of Directors for Lutheran Services of Florida, Treasurer of The Dwelling Church in North Carolina, and an advisory board member for the Synod Parish Deacons Oversight Committee, I have observed how mission, policy, and individuals converge during periods of growth and conflict. These experiences have enhanced my understanding of the importance of clear processes, open communication, and addressing new demands swiftly. Serving on the Hillsborough County School Special Needs Committee, located in the nation's eighth-largest school district, taught me how public systems manage compliance, compassion, and advocacy. Establishing One Ball, One Village and spearheading the Autism Speaks Walk highlighted the significance of integrity in leadership when dealing with at-risk communities. In the ELCA, my role as Assistant to the Bishop for Administration has provided me with practical experience in synod council procedures, constitutional amendments, and legal issues impacting congregations. These positions have shaped my perspective on a church that is both organized and profoundly faithful, a church where the role of secretary fosters flexibility in our mission while grounding us in our common values.

Biographical Information for Possible Nominee for Secretary of the ELCA

Mr. Peter Severson

Current Employment: County Government Liaison, Colorado Department of Human Services; professional vocalist, St. John's Episcopal Cathedral, Denver, CO

Congregation of Membership: House for All Sinners and Saints, Denver, CO (2014–2025, closed); First Lutheran Church, Sioux Falls, SD (present)

Date and Year of Ordination (if applicable):

Previous Employment:

Director, Lutheran Advocacy Ministry Colorado, ELCA Rocky Mountain Synod (2014–2024)

Assistant for Communication & Administration, ELCA Churchwide Office (2012–2014)

Assistant for Digital Records, University of Chicago Library (2011–2012)

ELCA Young Adults in Global Mission volunteer, Cuernavaca, Mexico (2009–2010)

Education with Earned Degrees (with institutions and years, most recent first):

M.A. in Divinity, University of Chicago (2012)

B.A. in Religion cum laude, Princeton University (2009)

Current Board and Committee Membership:

n/a

Past Board and Committee Membership:

ELCA representative to National Council of Churches Committee, Joint Action & Advocacy for Justice & Peace (2016–2024)

Board of Lutheran Family Services Rocky Mountains (2016–2024)

Rocky Mountain Synod Disaster Response Committee (2022–2024)

Describe your process of discerning this potential call to serve as the next secretary.

Six years ago, I hesitated to let my name go forward in the Secretary election process, but I sought to trust the Holy Spirit's movement in the church and my life. I am approaching the process similarly this time. I love the life and community I've been blessed with in Colorado, but I also know (and fear) that the Spirit is a first-rate disruptor of our plans. It was the needs of the church that brought me to Colorado to lead our ELCA advocacy work here, and so, despite finding a home here, I am open to the church's needs calling me elsewhere. Fortunately, this call process isn't about me, nor any specific candidate; it's about where the God is calling the ELCA. I've spent a lot of time in prayer and conversation with those close to me about this opportunity. Last time, I trusted the Spirit and got further than I expected. This time, I'm trusting that if the Holy Spirit disrupts my plans, it's because I have something to offer the Church. The only reason I have confidence in myself is that the church has nurtured me and given me the opportunity to lead before.

What specific leadership skills, administrative experience and spiritual gifts do you believe you would bring to the office of secretary?

For most of my life, I've experienced God in worship primarily as a church musician. Whether singing in the choir or playing the organ, piano, or euphonium, I've been spiritually gifted to know and share Jesus' love through music. We might not think of this administrative role to be especially well-served by musical experience. Even so, I believe knowing God through a prism of artistry and deep feeling is an important and balancing gift for a person serving a leadership role that could otherwise be received as overly bureaucratic, rigid, or dispassionately intellectual. I bring other skills to the table as well, including over ten years of leadership of one of our ELCA State Public Policy Offices. This role included regular congregational visits, policy analysis, dealing with partisan legislators, and advocating for justice in the public square. My previous role at the Churchwide Organization was administrative in nature, and I would bring those skills as well as those developed as a former library records assistant. Although I lack for

supervisory experience, I am at least self-aware about that, and would desire to make developing those skills a priority while serving.

What is your concept of the primary role of the secretary of the ELCA?

The Secretary is entrusted with overseeing critical administrative decisions in the church as well as managing important components of our life together. The Office of the Secretary oversees record-keeping and statistics, legal counsel and archives, meeting planning, roster management and constitutional oversight, all of which are indispensable parts of good governance for all three expressions of the church. The Secretary leads staff that partners with synods and congregations to steward our roster and collect important data that tell us part of the story about our life together as church. All of these functions can, and should, be animated by a deep sense of God's love for the world, stewarding our gifts for the sake of sharing the Gospel boldly. As a member of the administrative team, the Secretary has significant power to shape the Churchwide organization, and should model responsible and generous use of that power for all expressions of our church. They ought to be an accessible, active, and thoughtful servant-leader, a term which I believe means exercising leadership with a posture of humility and openness. I employed such an approach in my Lutheran advocacy work in Colorado and would seek to do so as Secretary.

Describe how your current and past board and committee membership experiences or previous congregation, synod, churchwide activities or community-related activities have significantly impacted you and informed your vision for serving as secretary.

I grew up in an ELCA congregation in South Dakota and held a variety of leadership roles as a youth. After graduating from Princeton, I served as a Young Adult in Global Mission in Mexico. I worked for two years at the Churchwide Office and subsequently over a decade on the staff of the Rocky Mountain Synod. By now, I've seen enough successes and failures in every expression of the church to know that salvation does not come from the institution; rather, it comes by God's grace alone through faith in Jesus. The institution, nonetheless, has an important role to play in sharing that message to the world. It's notable that we describe ELCA congregations, synods, and churchwide as equal expressions of the church: what we should be doing in all three is expressing a way of being that is following Jesus' call to sacrificial love. If we put that relationship first, the ELCA can do what we're meant to do. Maintaining good order through our constitutional structure ensures that our church's deacons, pastors, bishops, and lay people are freed to preach, proclaim, and live the Good News every day, with God's help.

**Biographical Information for Possible Nominee
for Secretary of the ELCA**

Mr. Josh Tatum

Current Employment: Attorney at Law, Plews Shadley Racher & Braun LLP (since 2010)

Congregation of Membership: Bethlehem, Indianapolis

Date and Year of Ordination (if applicable):

Previous Employment:

Indiana Supreme Court (2008–10)

Education with Earned Degrees (with institutions and years, most recent first):

J.D., Vanderbilt University Law School (2008)

M.Div., Vanderbilt University Divinity School (2008)

A.B., Wabash College (2003)

Current Board and Committee Membership:

Indiana Supreme Court Committee on Character and Fitness

Indiana-Kentucky Synod Constitutions Committee

Wabash Club of Indianapolis

Indiana YMCA Youth and Government

Scouting America Troop 72 at Tabernacle Presbyterian

Past Board and Committee Membership:

Our Redeemer Indianapolis Congregation Council

Christ Nashville, Tennessee Congregation Council

Indiana State Bar Association Treasurer and other roles

Indianapolis Bar Association Appellate section

Trinity Lutheran Seminary Summer Sampler Advisory Board

ELCA Committee on Discipline

Describe your process of discerning this potential call to serve as the next secretary.

I have prayed on this since a friend first suggested I would be a good candidate. I have had conversations with those who know me and individuals familiar with the position.

What specific leadership skills, administrative experience and spiritual gifts do you believe you would bring to the office of secretary?

I have served as Synod Attorney for the Indiana-Kentucky Synod for twelve years. I have worked alongside the synod and other religious organizations dealing with all sorts of issues. I have led in my law firm's management on personnel matters and other management. I have led nonprofit organizations as a volunteer alongside full-time staff. I have served as parliamentarian for church and professional assemblies. I am familiar with the ELCA's governance and culture but would largely bring fresh perspectives from these experiences from outside the churchwide office and broader ELCA.

What is your concept of the primary role of the secretary of the ELCA?

The Secretary serves as facilitator and steward of the church's mission by promoting good governance and risk management, organizing meetings, and overseeing record-keeping. The Secretary works with other church leaders to faithfully implement the vision of the church, ensuring compliance with legal requirements and the governing documents.

Describe how your current and past board and committee membership experiences or previous congregation, synod, churchwide activities or community-related activities have significantly impacted you and informed your vision for serving as secretary.

I have seen God leading the church into a new day through creative leaders who listen for God's voice through God's people. My experience with synod and congregation leaders has shown that discernment and decision-making are best conducted deliberately and by ensuring all have a voice.

**Biographical Information for Possible Nominee
for Secretary of the ELCA**

Pastor Lamont Wells

Current Employment: Executive Director, Network of ELCA (Lutheran) Colleges and Universities (NECU)

Congregation of Membership: Good Shepherd, Roosevelt, NY

Date and Year of Ordination (if applicable): 2003-03-30

Previous Employment:

2019–2022 Program Director, LuMin Higher Education Network (ELCA)
2014–2019 Director for Mission–Metro. NY Synod (ELCA), New York, NY
2009–2013 Consultant–Interfaith Center of Philadelphia, Philadelphia, PA
2008–2014 Pastor–Chief Executive Officer–Reformation CDC, Inc., Philadelphia, PA
2003–2008 Senior Pastor–The Lutheran Church of the Atonement, Atlanta, GA
2003–2010 Faculty–Youth Hope Builders–Interdenominational Theological Center, Atlanta, GA
2001–2008 College Chaplain/Campus Pastor–Atlanta University Center, Atlanta, GA
1995–2001 Grants Administrator–Georgia Dept. of Family and Children Services, Atlanta, GA

Education with Earned Degrees (with institutions and years, most recent first):

Arcadia University–School of Education, 2027, Glenside, PA, Ed.D: Educational Leadership
University of Pennsylvania–Center for Social Impact Strategy, 2021, Philadelphia, PA, Certification: Non-Profit Design and Strategy
Cornell University–SC Johnson College of Business, 2018, Ithaca, NY, Certification: Diversity and Inclusion
Harvard University–Divinity School, 2008, Cambridge, MA, Executive Leadership Certification
Emory University, 2007, Atlanta, GA, Clinical Counseling Residency (Level 2)
Johnson C. Smith Seminary (ITC), 2003, Atlanta, GA, Dual Degree: Master of Arts–Education, Master of Divinity–Leadership
Morehouse College, 1995, Atlanta, GA, B.A–Sociology/Religion; Concentration: Urban Studies/Spanish

Current Board and Committee Membership:

Lead director (Board Member) Educational & Institutional Insurance Administrators, Inc. (EIIA)
Board of Regents/Trustees Member (11 ELCA affiliated institutions): Augsburg University, Augustana College, California Lutheran University, Capital University, Concordia College (Moorhead, MN), Lenoir-Rhyne University, Muhlenberg College, Newberry College, Pacific Lutheran University, Texas Lutheran University.
Immediate past National President, ELCA–African Descent Lutheran Association
Committee Member, ELCA Task Force for Strategic Authentic Diversity
Board Advisor, Queer Christian Fellowship
Rainbow PUSH Coalition–Church Initiatives, Board Member
The Episcopal Church Urban Caucus Assembly, Ecumenical Member
Morehouse College Board of Preachers, Member

Past Board and Committee Membership:

ELCA Inter-religious Task Force, Team Member
ELCA Constitution Review Task Force, Team Member
Urban Theological Institute–United Lutheran Seminary (LTSP), Advisory Board Member
Youth Hope Builders Academy, Board Member
Neighborhood Interfaith Movement, Board Member
Central High School of Philadelphia Alumni Association, Board Member
Morehouse College National Alumni Association, Officer

Describe your process of discerning this potential call to serve as the next secretary.

Throughout my life, I have trusted that living fully into my vocational identity would lead me where I am meant to serve. I can honestly say I have never held a position I did not love—not because every experience was easy, but because I have always allowed my gifts to make room for me, embracing each call as a sacred opportunity to grow, serve, and honor God’s work in the world. As I discern this potential call to serve as Secretary of the ELCA, I have approached it with that same spirit of openness and trust. Through prayer, reflection, and conversations with mentors and colleagues, I have listened deeply to the needs of our church in this season. I hear a call for leaders who are both faithful and forward-thinking, who can steward the church’s governance with wisdom, care, and deep spiritual grounding. I believe that my experiences in leadership, constitutional work, and community building have prepared me for this moment—not to seek prominence, but to answer the Spirit’s quiet nudge toward greater service. In discerning this call, I am simply seeking to continue the pattern of my life’s work: responding with joy, courage, and faithfulness to where God leads.

What specific leadership skills, administrative experience and spiritual gifts do you believe you would bring to the office of secretary?

I believe I would bring a unique blend of leadership skills, administrative experience, and spiritual gifts to the office of Secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Leadership Skills: • I have led diverse organizations within the ELCA and beyond, including serving as Executive Director of the Network of ELCA Colleges and Universities (NECU), National President of the African Descent Lutheran Association, and Director for Mission in the Metro New York Synod. • In these roles, I have cultivated the ability to lead complex systems with clarity, vision, and a commitment to building consensus across different perspectives. • I bring a strong capacity for strategic leadership, collaborative problem-solving, and effective communication, which are essential for maintaining the unity and mission-focus of our churchwide governance. Administrative Experience: • My career has included extensive work in record management, governance oversight, organizational reporting, archival practices, and compliance administration—all core functions of the ELCA Secretary. • I have successfully overseen the management of national meetings, board minutes, roster maintenance, legal coordination, and statistical reporting. • Additionally, I have experience preparing organizational documents, constitutional amendments, and policy publications, ensuring transparency, accountability, and faithful adherence to governing documents. Spiritual Gifts: • I bring the spiritual gift of wisdom, rooted in a prayerful and discerning leadership style that seeks to honor Christ in all decisions and deliberations. • I am committed to the spiritual practices of hospitality, listening, and reconciliation, essential for serving a church that values diversity, justice, and faithful witness in the world. • I also carry a deep love for the church’s theological tradition, combined with a passion for innovation and renewal, believing that our governance should support the movement of the Holy Spirit in every generation. Together, these experiences and gifts position me to serve the ELCA as Secretary with faithfulness, integrity, and hope for the future of our church.

What is your concept of the primary role of the secretary of the ELCA?

The primary role of the Secretary in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is to serve as the chief steward of the church’s governance, memory, and constitutional integrity, ensuring that the administrative life of the church supports and strengthens its mission in the world. The Secretary is more than just a recorder of minutes or a keeper of documents; the Secretary safeguards the processes by which we discern God’s will together. Through careful record-keeping, constitutional interpretation, legal oversight, and archival preservation, the Secretary helps preserve the transparency, trust, and accountability that allow the ELCA to live faithfully as Christ’s church. The Secretary is also a bridge-builder—linking the Churchwide Assembly, Church Council, Conference of Bishops, and congregations by coordinating the flow of information, managing official communications, and ensuring that decisions are documented accurately and implemented faithfully. Finally, the Secretary acts as a theological and procedural interpreter. In moments of ambiguity, conflict, or transition, the Secretary offers guidance rooted in the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions*—not merely as rules to enforce, but as living documents that embody our shared commitments as a church formed by Word and Sacrament. In all things, the Secretary’s primary calling is to uphold the integrity of the church’s common life so that the ELCA can remain focused on proclaiming the Gospel and serving the world in Christ’s name. In summary, the Secretary is the steward of the ELCA’s governance and memory, ensuring that our decisions, records, and constitutional life faithfully support our mission. It’s not just administrative work—it’s a ministry of trust, transparency, and unity, helping the church stay focused on proclaiming the Gospel and living out our calling in the world.

Describe how your current and past board and committee membership experiences or previous congregation, synod, churchwide activities or community-related activities have significantly impacted you and informed your vision for serving as secretary.

My current and past board and committee experiences—within the ELCA, ecumenical circles, and community organizations—have profoundly shaped my vision for serving as Secretary. Serving as National President of the African Descent Lutheran Association and on the ELCA Task Force for Strategic Authentic Diversity deepened my understanding of how vital faithful governance is to the life of the church. I have seen firsthand how strong organizational structures, when rooted in equity and spiritual discernment, can empower diverse communities to thrive within the Body of Christ. My work on the ELCA Constitution Review Task Force and the Multicultural Ministries Task Force gave me hands-on experience with constitutional interpretation, policy development, and maintaining the integrity of organizational documents—all critical competencies for the Secretary's role. It taught me the importance of clarity, accountability, and responsiveness in governance processes. Beyond the ELCA, my board service with organizations like the Rainbow PUSH Coalition and the Episcopal Church Urban Caucus has expanded my commitment to ecumenical and justice-focused collaboration. These experiences strengthened my conviction that the church's administrative life must always be aligned with its public witness for justice, inclusion, and reconciliation. Finally, my early congregational leadership, synodical service, and campus ministry work showed me that sound administration is not simply technical—it is a spiritual ministry of care. Stewarding minutes, records, and constitutions is an act of nurturing trust, transparency, and unity across the church. Together, these experiences have shaped my vision for the office of Secretary: to be a faithful steward of the church's memory, a careful interpreter of its governing documents, and a hopeful servant of its Spirit-led future.