

Candidates for Bishop

NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA SYNOD

Biographical Information

Pastor Samuel R. Zeiser

Born: November 30, 1951 ordained: May 6, 1979

Current Position

Pastor, Christ Lutheran Church, Allentown

Previous Positions

Pastor, Bethany, West Reading

Pastor, Prince of Peace, Johnsonville

Pastor, St. John's, Nanticoke

Education

Ph.D. Drew University [2001]

Master of Sacred Theology, LTSP [1989]

Master of Divinity, LTSP [1977]

Bachelor of Arts, Albright College [1973]

Current or past synodical or churchwide activities that have prepared me for service as bishop of this synod

Synod Council; second term

2007 Churchwide Assembly

Member of various synod committees

Instructor – SALM Program

Current or past community related activities that have prepared me for service as bishop of this synod

Community-based ecumenical/interfaith ministries

Fire Company Chaplain

Public Library Board of Directors

Gifts that I bring to the office of bishop of this synod

The Holy Spirit has worked to raise up gifts in me that have varied in different congregational settings, from small to large. My clearest understanding of the Spirit's gift's to me arise from a realization that the Spirit has used the following pastoral patterns in my ministry of word and sacrament: a deep faith that Christ is risen and is present among us; a passion for the mission of Christ's church in our time; a commitment to discern and articulate a vision for that mission; a readiness to motivate support that will help carry out that mission; patience in the face of challenge; focus in matters of organization and goal setting, and a conviction that the Spirit will accomplish God's intention in all that is begun in Jesus' name.

The principle challenge of this synod in the next six years and how I would address it

The anxiety produced by declining membership in some of our synod congregations poses the principal challenge to this synod in the next six years. It raises uncertainty about financial support, about mission energy, and about future ministry viability. In addition, it taxes a vital component of our life together, one that otherwise offers great hope: the strength that is ours as congregations united across boundaries of communities, counties, synods, and regions. Conversations that took place in mission districts and focus groups prior to this assembly established an important pattern of communication that needs to be enhanced. I would focus energy and time on finding ways in which the anxiety can be overcome with strategies of congregational transformation for those who are ready to do the hard work of congregational renewal.

My leadership style is

My leadership style is collegial; driven by objectives; emphasizes consensus building; encourages expression of all viewpoints; creates accountability; draws on people of competence and creativity; offers affirmation and gratitude; and is subject to regular review and assessment.