

Benjamin T. Ball

Candidate for LCMS President



BORN: March 30, 1972, Madison Heights, Mich.

WIFE'S NAME: Serena

NUMBER OF CHILDREN: 5

COLLEGE: Concordia University Chicago (1995)

SEMINARY: Concordia Seminary, St. Louis (1999)

YEARS AS A MEMBER OF SYNOD CONGREGATIONS: 51

YEARS AS A ROSTERED MEMBER OF SYNOD: 24

YEAR OF ORDINATION: 1999

PASTORATES

- St. Luke's Lutheran Church, Dedham, Mass. (1999–2004)
- St. Paul Lutheran Church, Brookfield, Ill. (2004–2012)
- St. Paul Lutheran Church, Hamel, Ill. (2012–Present)

OTHER SYNOD OFFICES

- Convention Delegate (2007, 2016, 2019)
- Participant, LCMS Model Theological Conference (2010)
- Doctrinal Reviewer (2013–2019)
- Assistant Chaplain, LCMS Convention (2013)
- Planning Committee Member and Presenter, LCMS Institute on Liturgy, Preaching and Church Music (2014, 2017)
- Member, Convention Floor Committees: Seminary Education, Structure and Administration (2016, 2019)
- Chairman, Committee for Convention Nominations (2019–2023)
- Chairman, Convention Floor Committee: Schools, Family, Young Adults and Youth (2023)
- 6th Vice-President, Central Region (2019–Present)

OTHER DISTRICT OFFICES

- Member, Convention Floor Committees (2000, 2015)
- Member, New England District Worship Commission (2001–2004)
- Circuit Counselor, Northern Illinois District (2006–2009)
- Member, Northern Illinois District East Region Pastoral Conference Committee (2006–2010)
- Secretary, Northern Illinois District Nominations Committee (2009)
- Circuit Visitor, Southern Illinois District (2015–2018)
- Vice-Chairman, Southern Illinois District Pastoral Conference (2017–2018)
- 2nd Vice-President, Southern Illinois District (2018–2019)

OTHER SIGNIFICANT SERVICE OR EXPERIENCE

- Pastor-in-Residence, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis (2002)
- Supervisor of Deaconess Field Workers, Concordia University Chicago (2005–2012)
- Book Reviewer, *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* (2016)
- Member, Board of Directors, Metro-East Lutheran High School, Edwardsville, Ill. (2017–2019)
- Contributor, *The Lutheran Witness* (2020)
- Contributor, *The Emigration of the Saxon Lutherans in the Year 1838 and Their Settlement in Perry County, Missouri*, Concordia Publishing House (2022)
- Supervisor of Field Workers, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis (2015–Present)
- Vicarage Supervisor, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne (2021–Present)
- Head Boys Basketball Coach, St. Paul Lutheran Squires, Hamel, Ill. (2022–Present)

Q&A

1. Tell us what you love about the LCMS.

Our Synod accepts without reservation the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the written Word of God and the only rule and norm of faith and practice, and we accept the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as a true and unadulterated exposition of the Word of God. I love the same confession. I love that the people of our Synod take this confession as their own and desire to have it preached and taught in our homes, congregations, schools and missions for the salvation of all who would believe.

2. What current issue in the Synod presents us with the greatest opportunity for beneficial change, and, if elected, how would you lead us toward that change?

The issue remains that the devil and the world attack our people and our confession of faith. From within, there is a remnant of those who teach anti-nomianism and Gospel reductionism, and promote divisive critical theory. From without, the devil and the world attack individual Christians and families by leading them to reject the order of creation. We need a renewed focus on the Word of God taught and lived in the home. Strong Lutheran families will make strong Lutheran congregations and a strong Lutheran Synod.

3. What do you think about the Concordias, and how should they relate to the Synod?

The Concordias should remain owned and operated by the congregations of the LCMS. They should support our congregations by unequivocally teaching and confessing the truth of God's Word and His working in this world in every academic discipline. Merely being "aligned" with our confession, as Concordia University Texas desires, is simply unacceptable. Their original purpose of preparation of servants of the church must be strengthened. Simply put, they should be confessional Lutheran institutions of higher learning for Missouri Synod Lutherans and for those who would desire what we have to offer — the Truth.

4. What things do you most want to see happen within the LCMS over the next decade? Within Lutheranism internationally? Why?

Within the Synod we need a renewal of our piety. Our constitution has as a condition of membership the "exclusive use of doctrinally pure agenda, hymnbooks, and catechisms in church and school." If the Lutheran faith is not sung, prayed and lived, it will not be believed or confessed. We especially need to teach our young men to fight against the flesh and help them to be faithful heads of their homes and congregations. Internationally, I would like to see our partner churches who hold membership in the Lutheran World Federation leave that heterodox union for the sake of our shared confession.

5. What's your favorite hymn and why?

"Wake, Awake, for Night Is Flying" (*LSB* 516, *TLH* 609) is the "King of the Chorales" and objectively the greatest of all Lutheran hymns. Philipp Nicolai's hymn, based on Matthew 25:1–13, directs us to be prepared, watchful and wise while we wait for our Lord's return as the Bridegroom. When He returns, we will then gather around His radiant throne singing eternal hymns of praise. In addition, it was the office hymn at my wedding, and it always reminds me to be thankful for my bride.

Personal Statement

"This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God." Our Lord is gracious to me, calling me to be His servant and steward of His mysteries. It is an honor to be nominated for Synod president, as it is an honor to serve as vice-president. I believe that at this time serving as a vice-president is better suited to my callings as husband, father and pastor. However I might serve our Synod, I seek to aid our congregations heed what Dr. Walther wrote: A Synod's "primary duty is to be faithful to the Confessions in word and deed."

Patrick T. Ferry

Candidate for LCMS President



BORN: June 25, 1959, Leander, Texas

WIFE'S NAME: Tamara

NUMBER OF CHILDREN: 5

COLLEGE: St. John's College, Winfield, Kan. (1981)

SEMINARY: Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne (1987)

OTHER DEGREES:

- Ph.D., University of Colorado, Boulder, Colo. (1996)
- D.D., Concordia Seminary, St. Louis (2022)

YEARS AS A MEMBER OF SYNOD CONGREGATIONS: 45

YEARS AS A ROSTERED MEMBER OF SYNOD: 35

YEAR OF ORDINATION: 1988

PASTORATES

- Wheat Ridge Lutheran Church, Wheat Ridge, Colo.(1987-1989)
- St. Andrew's Lutheran Church, Laramie, Wyo.....(1989-1991)

OTHER FULL-TIME POSITIONS

- Faculty, Concordia University Wisconsin (1991-1997)
- President, Concordia University Wisconsin.....(1997-2021)
- President, Concordia University Ann Arbor (2013-2021)

OTHER SIGNIFICANT SERVICE OR EXPERIENCE

- Chair, Lutheran Education Conference of North America(2004-2006, 2020-2021)
- Secretary, Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities.. (2009-2013)
- Board Member, Fundacion Educacional Concordia, Montevideo, Uruguay... (2017-Present)

Personal Statement

Hope, not fear! The LCMS is poised to share an enduring and eternal hope with a world flailing in fears. Ours is hope built on Jesus Christ alone. Hope compels us to revitalize evangelism emphases to reach deeply into a harvest field as plentiful as ever. Hope stirs us to champion Lutheran education to bless and keep our children and grandchildren, and to extend Christ's love to others led by the Lord to our schools. Hope moves us to support and encourage, to love and trust one another as we serve the church in different ways in different places.

Q&A

1. Tell us what you love about the LCMS.

Most obviously, I treasure our shared commitment to the truths of Scripture and our Lutheran Confessions — especially the centrality of the saving Gospel promise in Christ Jesus. In celebration, we unite around themes of salvation by grace alone, through faith in Christ alone, revealed in Scripture alone. More personally, I love that the LCMS introduced these truths to me as a young adult convert and that other members of my family were also brought to faith. Some of them are now in the nearer presence of Jesus in the Church Triumphant. For whom do I give thanks to God for that? The LCMS!

2. What current issue in the Synod presents us with the greatest opportunity for beneficial change, and, if elected, how would you lead us toward that change?

We would benefit from changing how we speak and listen to each other and how we interact with the world. Instead of conceding precipitous membership decline to immutable demographic determinism, we do well to encourage one another in recognition that the harvest remains plentiful and the power of the Holy Spirit through the Gospel is undiminished. We've made clear to the broken world around us what we are *against*. But we need to clarify to our neighbor who we are *for* — the One who is for us: Jesus who came to save the world that God so loved.

3. What do you think about the Concordias, and how should they relate to the Synod?

Since I was brought to faith as a student at an LCMS school, nearly all my adult life has been spent in LCMS higher education. The Concordias faithfully fulfill the historic role of preparing professional workers for the Lord's church. Our schools also equip learners with excellence for other Christian vocations. The entirety of each student's collegiate experience is shaped in no small measure by our Lutheran faith. This education nurtures Lutheran students, encourages other Christians, and engages unchurched and nonbelievers encountering Christ on campus. The Concordias are a gift of God to the LCMS and deserve our confidence, trust and support.

4. What things do you most want to see happen within the LCMS over the next decade? Within Lutheranism internationally? Why?

Is it too much to hope for a Synod with people walking closely together in a spirit of mutual respect and encouragement? Who is drawn into a community whose members repel one another? Simply put, there is too much division among us. The president must bring people together from across the LCMS to listen to one another. He should also unite with our partners in the International Lutheran Council in common confession and a common conviction to extend the Gospel within our communities and around the world. Locally and globally, all kinds of churches are needed to reach all kinds of people.

5. What's your favorite hymn and why?

A confession of faith as old as the Book of Job, "I Know That My Redeemer Lives." What comfort this sweet sentence gives. "If Christ is risen, nothing else matters," Jaroslav Pelikan once famously wrote, "and if Christ is not risen — nothing else matters." We stake everything on this hope — Jesus Christ is raised from the dead. Because He lives, we confess our belief in the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. At times we are distracted by other lesser affairs. Ultimately, nothing else matters. Christ's church exists within the context of resurrection reality.

Matthew C. Harrison

Candidate for LCMS President



BORN: March 14, 1962, Sioux City, Iowa

WIFE'S NAME: Kathy

NUMBER OF CHILDREN: 2

COLLEGE: Morningside University, Sioux City, Iowa (1984)

SEMINARY: Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne (1989)

OTHER DEGREES:

- S.T.M., Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne
- LL.D., Concordia University Ann Arbor
- D.D., Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne
- Graduate Studies, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis

YEARS AS A MEMBER OF SYNOD CONGREGATIONS: 61

YEARS AS A ROSTERED MEMBER OF SYNOD: 32

YEAR OF ORDINATION: 1991

PASTORATES

- St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Westgate, Iowa (1991-1995)
- Zion Lutheran Church, Fort Wayne (1995-2001)
- Village Lutheran Church, Ladue, Mo..... (2010-Present)

OTHER FULL-TIME POSITIONS

- Missionary to Native Canadians, Lutheran Association of Missionaries and Pilots (1983-1984)
- Graduate Assistant, Concordia Theological Seminary..... (1990-1991)
- Executive Director, LCMS World Relief and Human Care, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod..... (2001-2010)
- President, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (2010-Present)

OTHER SYNOD OFFICES

- Member, Synodical Nominations Committee (1994-1995)
- Convention Delegate (1995, 1998)
- Member, Board for Mission Services (1998-2001)
- Board Chair, Lutheran Center for Religious Liberty (2015-Present)
- Board Member, International Lutheran Society of Wittenberg (2007-Present; chair since 2019)

OTHER DISTRICT OFFICES

- District Task Force on Rural Ministry (1993-1995)

OTHER SIGNIFICANT SERVICE OR EXPERIENCE

- Co-Founder, St. Peter's/Zion Project for Neighborhood Renewal.....(1995-2000)
- Board, Project Renew (Neighborhood Housing Corporation)..... (1995-2001)
- Fort Wayne Urban League Building Committee..... (1999)
- Catholic/Lutheran Dialogue; LCMS President's Church Relations Cabinet..... (1996-2001; 2001-2010)
- Lutheran Services in America Board; Lutheran World Relief Board..... (2001-2010)
- International Lutheran Council Board Member (2010-Present)
- Pro-life Speaker/Activist, St. Louis March on the Arch, Chicago March for Life, D.C. Rose Dinner (2010-Present)
- Author/translator/editor of numerous publications, including: *Church and Office*; *Second Thoughts on Living Together*; *Meditations on Divine Mercy*; *Lonely Way*; *Letters to Lutheran Pastors*, vol. 1-3; *At Home in the House of My Fathers*; *Christ Have Mercy*; *A Little Book on Joy*; *A Simple Way to Pray*; *Church Order*; *Letters from a Pastor's Heart*; *Women Pastors?*; *Closed Communion?*; *One Lord: Two Hands?*; *Lutheran Preaching?*; *Why I am Joyfully Lutheran*; *"A Theological Statement for Mission for the 21st Century"*; *Take Courage*
- Managed the Synod's national responses to Haiti, Asian tsunami, Katrina, etc..... (2001-2010)

Q&A

1. Tell us what you love about the LCMS.

I love that in the LCMS, it's all about Jesus. "God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation" (2 COR. 5:19). Jesus' inerrant Word. Jesus' Baptism. Jesus' Supper. Jesus' love for the lost and hurting. I love the sweet, short confession of this faith in Luther's Small Catechism. Every congregation, every pastor, every teacher, every worker, every school, every institution exists for this Gospel of free forgiveness for all. We all confess, "Chief of sinners though I be, Jesus shed His blood for me" (LSB 611).

2. What current issue in the Synod presents us with the greatest opportunity for beneficial change, and, if elected, how would you lead us toward that change?

Real answers are not structural or bureaucratic. The New Testament word for repentance means "a change of heart." We are sinners redeemed. The daily change we need most is repentance. Repentance over lack of love for Jesus and His life-giving Word; lack of love for our pastor and the priesthood of the baptized; lack of love for our precious *Book of Concord*: "No one comes to the Father except through me" (JOHN 14:6; FC SD XI 66); lack of love for those who need to hear of Jesus and be invited to church. Law and Gospel bring real change, where it's really needed.

How will the trends be reversed?
Healthy congregations grow as our

members reach out and bring others to be taught and to be baptized (MATT. 28:19). Time to pray for blessings and to double down across the Synod with *Every One His Witness* (personal evangelism), with congregational revitalization and church planting — to reach both immigrant communities and growing areas where we presently have no churches. *Healthy families! Discipleship! Healthy church workers! Strong congregations (even in tough situations)!* The Synod's Office of National Mission helps districts help congregations be strong.

3. What do you think about the Concordias, and how should they relate to the Synod?

The universities have the strongest theological and administrative presidents we've had in decades. Praise God! It's not been easy. Concordia University Wisconsin and Ann Arbor's (CUWAA) future is bright. My only goal is that we be who we say we are, with schools that confess and live the authority of the inerrant Scriptures and our confessions. That precludes wokism. The challenge is to have the right balance between real accountability and freedom to accomplish their mission of training workers and other God-pleasing vocations. We are on track to do just that. The tragedy at Concordia University Texas (CTX) breaks our hearts. See the summary of my visitation reports on CTX and CUWAA.

4. What things do you most want to see happen within the LCMS over the next decade? Within Lutheranism internationally? Why?

Continued growth in witness. Thousands have been trained by *Every One His Witness*. We need more. We exist to proclaim the Good News of Christ (ACTS 4:12). We are working to train more pastors and teachers. Half the counties in the U.S. have no LCMS congregations. Let's plant *and* care for every little congregation. The devil is hurting people. They need the mercy of Christ (GAL. 5:13). Our life together in Jesus is a gift in these hard times. With our huge footprint, may we remain and grow as the major force for faithful global Lutheranism for the sole sake of the Gospel. Miracles are happening.

5. What's your favorite hymn and why?

"Jesus, Thy Blood and Righteousness" (LSB 563). Zinzendorf visited a mission to slaves in the West Indies. On the boat home, he wrote this hymn based on 1 Peter 1:18–19: "You were ransomed ... not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ." Luther quoted 1 Peter in the Catechism: "[Jesus] has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person ... not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death." "This then shall be my only plea: Jesus hath lived and died for me" (LSB 563:5). Unworthy wretch that I am, I cling to Jesus only.

Personal Statement

The office is not a right, but a trust, ever bestowed upon sinners (1 TIM. 1:15). Christ's blood-bought forgiveness is for all (JOHN 3:16). The Scriptures are crystal clear (JOHN 20:31). Christ's forgiveness and compassion for the lost and hurting are ours to deliver (LUKE 6:36; 19:10). Crosses work for good (ROM. 8:28) and drive us to Christ (2 COR. 12:10). Culture will only darken (LUKE 21:28). But the Gospel light shines the brighter from tiniest to largest congregation (via pastors, workers, laity, families). Finances are solid. Seminaries are strong. Opportunities abound. Schools! Church plants! Mercy! Mission! Hope brings action (1 PETER 1:13).

Peter K. Lange

Candidate for LCMS President



BORN: May 16, 1962, Houston, Texas

WIFE'S NAME: Marcia

NUMBER OF CHILDREN: 4

COLLEGE: Concordia University Chicago (1984)

SEMINARY: Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne (1988)

OTHER DEGREES:

- S.T.M., Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne (1998)

YEARS AS A MEMBER OF SYNOD CONGREGATIONS: 61

YEARS AS A ROSTERED MEMBER OF SYNOD: 33

YEAR OF ORDINATION: 1990

PASTORATES

- St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Concordia, Mo..... (1990–1999)
- St. John's Lutheran Church, Topeka, Kan..... (1999–2015)

OTHER FULL-TIME POSITIONS

- Teaching Assistant, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne..... (1988–1990)

OTHER SYNOD OFFICES

- LCMS First Vice-President..... (2019–Present)
- Member, LCMS Board of Directors..... (2019–Present)
- Member, Commission on Theology and Church Relations..... (2019–Present)
- Member, Floor Committee on Structure and Ecclesiastical Matters..... (2013)
- Chairman, Synod Convention Floor Committee 15, Reformation..... (2016)
- Member, 13-01A Task Force on Priesthood and Office..... (2016–2019)
- Secretary, LCMS Council of Presidents..... (2018–2019)
- Chairman, Floor Committee on International Witness..... (2019)
- Chairman, LCMS Colloquy Committee for Pastoral Ministry..... (2019–Present)
- Chairman, LCMS Colloquy Committee for Commissioned Ministry..... (2019–Present)

OTHER DISTRICT OFFICES

- Kansas District Board of Caring Ministry..... (2012–2015)
- LCMS Kansas District First Vice-President..... (2012–2015)
- LCMS Kansas District President..... (2015–2019)

OTHER SIGNIFICANT SERVICE OR EXPERIENCE

- Missouri District Board for Parish Education..... (1992–1999)
- Missouri District Church Worker Recruitment Committee..... (1992–1999)
- Doctrinal Reviewer..... (1998–2009)
- Synod Convention Delegate..... (1998, 2007, 2013, 2016)
- Vicarage Supervisor..... (2002–2007)
- Presenter, *Lutheran Service Book* introductory workshops..... (2006)
- Board of Regents, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis..... (2019–Present)

Q&A

1. Tell us what you love about the LCMS.

“Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them” (ROM. 12:6). It’s an honor to have received sufficient nominations to be placed on the ballot for president of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. The vote of confidence is humbling, and if this is where the Lord leads, I’m willing to serve. That said, I’ve enjoyed serving as LCMS first vice-president and would very much welcome an opportunity to continue in that role, building on the work of the last triennium and supporting the able and faithful leadership of our current Synod president.

2. What current issue in the Synod presents us with the greatest opportunity for beneficial change, and, if elected, how would you lead us toward that change?

The degree to which the culture influences the baptized and the pressure the culture exerts on our institutions are, I believe, the issues that present our Synod with the greatest opportunities for beneficial change. As the world around us hurtles increasingly in a post-Christian direction, we have a message to share that stands in sharp contrast to the prevailing wisdom (JOHN 15:19); we offer a strong word of hope centered in the redeeming work of Jesus Christ. If elected, I would collaborate with others in the LCMS to instill this message more deeply in our members (COL. 3:16) and make it known more widely (ISAIAH 12:5).

3. What do you think about the Concordias, and how should they relate to the Synod?

As someone who grew up on a Concordia campus, graduated from a Concordia (along with all my siblings) and sent one of our children to a Concordia, I love our CUS schools and believe they are among the treasures that have distinguished our Synod. As agencies of the LCMS, our Concordias should serve our congregations in whatever ways the Synod in convention deems best. I'd like to see a courageous reevaluation of our Concordias, which would serve our Synod well and likely attract a greater number of our young people.

4. What things do you most want to see happen within the LCMS over the next decade? Within Lutheranism internationally? Why?

A stronger culture of evangelism in our congregations and throughout the LCMS. Tremendous success for the *Set Apart to Serve* initiative. Many more pastors and missionaries graduating annually from our seminaries. More teachers and commissioned workers graduating annually from our Concordias. An increase in the on-campus student bodies of our seminaries and Concordias. Solutions to provide and support well-trained pastors within reasonable driving distance of every LCMS congregation. More Lutheran schools that are well-staffed with rostered teachers. A continuing increase in the number of partner churches throughout the world. A collaborative rethinking of our funding model and priorities for our work together as the LCMS.

5. What's your favorite hymn and why?

There are many hymns that I appreciate in the hymnals I've used over the years (*TLH*, *LW* and *LSB*). I have favorites for particular occasions and liturgical seasons (for example, "This Joyful Eastertide"), and there are certain hymn tunes and settings that stir my soul ("A Mighty Fortress"). I'm particularly drawn to solidly theological and richly poetic hymn texts that express my prayers in ways I couldn't conceive on my own. "Lord, Thee I Love with All My Heart," for example, takes me from tender petitions about today, through my death and resurrection, to the exuberant joy of eternal life with the Lord.

Personal Statement

"Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them" (ROM. 12:6). It's an honor to have received sufficient nominations to be placed on the ballot for president of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. The vote of confidence is humbling, and if this is where the Lord leads, I'm willing to serve. That said, I've enjoyed serving as LCMS first vice-president and would very much welcome an opportunity to continue in that role, building on the work of the last triennium and supporting the able and faithful leadership of our current Synod president.

Richard Snow

Candidate for LCMS President



BORN: January 2, 1961, Sioux Falls, S.D.

WIFE'S NAME: Valorie

NUMBER OF CHILDREN: 3

COLLEGE: Moorhead State University, Moorhead, Minn. (1983)

SEMINARY: Concordia Seminary, St. Louis (1987)

YEARS AS A MEMBER OF SYNOD CONGREGATIONS: 62

YEARS AS A ROSTERED MEMBER OF SYNOD: 36

YEAR OF ORDINATION: 1987

PASTORATES

- Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, Auburn, Neb. (1987–2000)
- St. John Lutheran Church, Battle Creek, Neb. (2000–2015)

OTHER DISTRICT OFFICES

- Circuit Visitor (1991–2000)
- LCMS Nebraska District Vice-President (2006–2015)
- LCMS Nebraska District President (2015–Present)

OTHER SIGNIFICANT SERVICE OR EXPERIENCE

- Pastoral Advisor, Nebraska District LLL (2008–2012)
- Board of Regents, Concordia University, Nebraska (2015–Present)

Personal Statement

We are people of hope. We are confident in Jesus and His promises. Unfortunately, we too often mirror our fractured society, labeling and discarding those who disagree with us. We need to commit to one another in gathering around God's uniting Word. I encourage congregations to grow in God's Word, mercy and outreach. In our district we are fostering worker relational health, encouraging Sabbath rest and time for family. We are working to build stronger relationships between congregations and our fellow workers in circuit and district, living out purity of doctrine and the priority of mission in the local congregation.

Q&A

1. Tell us what you love about the LCMS.

I love the people — people who give themselves to God's work because they love Jesus, and they love His church. We rejoice in and proclaim our complete reliance on God's grace in Christ and the gift of faith through the work of the Holy Spirit in God's Word and Sacraments. We are strong in doctrine because we want to make a difference with our witness and works of mercy. We have passion and tension in the dual priorities of doctrine and mission. I love our connectedness as a family of faith and as part of the Body of Christ.

2. What current issue in the Synod presents us with the greatest opportunity for beneficial change, and, if elected, how would you lead us toward that change?

One of the biggest issues is our struggle to trust one another and speak with both conviction and patience. This is critical as we seek to tackle any number of the external and internal threats that confront us. I am working to build trust and strengthen unity through open and honest dialogue that trusts God's Word to establish truth and strengthen the Body of Christ. We are building a dialogue structure on the circuit and regional levels to center on Scripture and the confessions as we discuss topics of societal conflict as well as church division.

3. What do you think about the Concordias, and how should they relate to the Synod?

Our Concordias are incredible gifts of and for the church to prepare people for service in church and world. They are touching the lives of people with the Gospel. Like the work done with our congregations in Nebraska, I want to build an even stronger bond with our Concordias and help them collaborate with one another. We need to encourage our Concordias, not undermine them. Rather than sporadic investigations, we need regular visitation by area district presidents, Concordia University System members and the LCMS president. Ministry is strengthened by relationships gathered around His Word.

4. What things do you most want to see happen within the LCMS over the next decade? Within Lutheranism internationally? Why?

First, I am working to build trust among our clergy through open and thorough dialogue centered around the Word and our confessions. We can't walk together if we don't talk together, and we can't talk together if we don't meet together. We need to be committed to gathering. Second, we need healthy workers living healthy lives with Sabbath rest and strong family connections. Healthy lives and marriages are strong Gospel witnesses. Third, we need the full engagement of laity in family ministry, devotions and Gospel witness among friends, neighbors and coworkers. The whole Body of Christ needs to be engaged.

5. What's your favorite hymn and why?

"My Song Is Love Unknown," "Jesus Christ Is Risen Today," "Chief of Sinners Though I Be," "Holy, Holy, Holy" ... there are too many great songs of faith for only one favorite, but one of my favorites is "Joy to the World." I have many wonderful memories, both as a child and then as a parent, gathering with my family in worship, singing with full voices in praise to God for the gift of His Son and the joy He brings. The church needs His joy and needs to express her joy in a world that groans to receive her King.