



Central States Synod

Responsibilities and duties of the bishop of Central States Synod

The official job description of the bishop can be found in chapter 8 of the synod constitution which identifies the bishop as the synod's **pastor, president**, and member of the **Conference of bishops**. While the constitution specifies the bishop's duties, the bishop in consultation with the synod council, has the authority to determine how those duties are carried out.

Pastor of the synod – There are opportunities to preach and lead worship in so many congregations across the synod, to celebrative anniversaries, transitions, ordinations, or simply to be present with and among the people. This allows the bishop to know the congregations and people of the synod and for them to know the bishop. This better enables the bishop to provide pastoral care to rostered and synod-authorized ministers as well as congregations. While this does require a great deal of travel across the two states, the synod currently owns two cars for convenience and to minimize expenses.

While the bishop has full discretion regarding their travel schedule and frequency, the bishop also is responsible for establishing their own communication preferences and boundaries. The synod office is equipped to handle e-mail, phone calls, text messaging, and video conferencing. Responding to messages, requests, and concerns is part of the bishop's communications almost daily.

President of the synod – As the chief "officer" of the synod the bishop exercises leadership regarding the vision and direction of the ministry and the operations of the organization. This includes supervising the staff, ensuring compliance with the constitution, adopting a budget, reviewing financial expenditures, consulting the synod attorney regarding any legal issues, and assuring state and federal filings are completed.

The bishop (or designee) sits on the board of Bethany College, Camp Tomah Shinga, Kansas Interfaith Action, and Lutheran Social Services as well as any synod committees such as candidacy, endowment, Companion Synod, Lutherans Restoring Creation, etc. Most of these meetings are conducted by video conference, although there are occasional in-person meetings throughout the year. For example, once a year the synod council meets in person.

Conference of Bishops – The bishop serves not only the Central States Synod but as a bishop of the ELCA. The Conference of Bishops meets twice a year in Chicago for five days. The conference elects its own officers, has standing committees and a representative to each ELCA churchwide unit and separately incorporated ministry. The conference has a particular role in matters related to rostered ministers, reviews proposals before they are passed along to the ELCA Church Council for adoption, and advises the Presiding Bishop in matters related to churchwide planning and ecumenical relations. Bishops are often asked to consult with

churchwide staff on various issues and projects, such as the Candidacy Leadership Development Working Group which is working on redoing the candidacy process. All bishops attend the churchwide assembly every three years as voting members and are asked to attend the Youth Gatherings. Additionally, the bishops of Region 4 (which includes the Central States Synod) meet once a year in retreat. Other than the Conference of Bishops meetings and Churchwide Assembly, individual bishops may determine the amount of time and travel spent on Churchwide, ecumenical, or other activities outside of the synod.

Important dates to keep in mind:

Bishops' Formation in Chicago – June 22-26, 2025

Conference of Bishops Meeting in Chicago – September 23-27, 2025

Central States Synod Bishop Installation – September 28, 2025