

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION FORM:

NOMINEE FOR BISHOP OF THE NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA SYNOD

1. Name: Rebecca (Becca) Middeke-Conlin (pronounced mid-deh-key-con-lin), pronouns she/her/hers

2. Current Position: Pastor, St Paul's Southside & Good Shepherd Lutheran Churches, Easton

3. Congregation Membership: St Paul's Southside, Easton

4. Date and Year of Birth: May 30, 1981

5. Date and Year of Ordination: September 20, 2009

6. Previous Positions:

Associate Pastor, Lutheran Church of the Holy Spirit, Emmaus, PA, 2014-2016

Pastor, Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Georgetown, CT, 2009-2014

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

Master of Divinity, Lutheran Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, 2008

Bachelor of Science, Mathematics, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, 2003

8. List up to five (5) current or past synod or churchwide activities that would inform your service as bishop of this synod.

- 2019 Churchwide Assembly Voting Member
- We Love..., a day of worship and workshops to help congregations be more welcoming to our LGBTQIA siblings in Christ, lead organizer 2019 & 2020
- Synod Worship committee 2019-present
- YoYoFa (Youth, Young Adult and Family Ministry Team) team member and now co-convenor for NEPA Synod, 2016-present, including bringing the work of Growing Young from Fuller Youth Institute to congregations throughout the synod
- Bear Creek Camp Chaplain multiple summer sessions and retreat weekend since 2015

9. List up to five (5) current or past community-related activities that would inform your service as bishop of this synod.

- After-school Program Director at Cheston & Paxinosa Elementary Schools in Easton through Family Connection. Worked with community partners and teachers to organize up to 60 students at each school to participate in a 4-day a week after school program focused on academic and inter-personal enrichment, 2016-2019
- Old Allentown Neighborhood Association Member and former board member. Organize regular community cleanup, social, and civic events for the neighborhood, 2014-present



- New Haven Stitching group (knitters and cross stitchers) 2008-present, one positive of the pandemic is to move online for continued community even though so many of us have moved away
- Georgetown (CT) Volunteer Fire Department Chaplain 2010-2014

10. What gifts would you bring to the office of bishop of this synod? (1,000 characters maximum)

Two of my biggest spiritual gifts are visioning and consensus-building. Innovation is on the horizon for our synod, and I am excited to help bring forth the vision that God is unfolding. I am able to listen to where the Holy Spirit is calling us and help discern how that can become a reality. While change is often hard, I am willing to be a prophetic voice and tell people the hard truth but then work with them in the midst of the pain and grief that might come with this hard truth in order to make necessary changes. Partnership in input and ideas is key so that the majority of people will support the necessary changes that need to be made.

A third gift, which helps the other two, is the gift of administration, especially in terms of key-chain leadership. I am able to get people involved at their comfort level, delegate tasks to others and follow up with them to make sure the tasks are getting done, but also that the tasks are not overwhelming.

11. What do you see as the principal challenge to this synod in the next six (6) years, and how would you address it? (1,000 characters maximum)

Decline. Decline in churches, membership and finances which can lead to a decline in faith.

The way to address decline is by addressing faith. We are a people who are called by God and led by the Holy Spirit to do Christ's work in this world. If we trust in the Spirit, follow God and do Christ's work, then we do not need to worry. Decline still may happen. But when it does, then we can trust that God is still in control. A congregation's closure is not a failing but a fulfillment of its mission. This fulfilled mission can lead to a new mission when the closing congregation uses their people and funds to start new ministry, in its neighborhood or beyond. Decreasing funds are an opportunity to reassess, restructure and reprioritize so that we are focusing on ministry that brings energy to the people doing it and builds the kingdom, rather than just perpetuating what we have ALWAYS done.

The same God who fed 5000 with just 5 loaves and 2 fish will also provide for our synod in abundance.

12. Describe your leadership style. (1,000 characters maximum)

My ideal leadership style is to work with others who can be trusted to follow through on tasks; scheduling meetings when needed and not based on the calendar. My role is to make sure all tasks are delegated and no one person, including myself, becomes solely responsible for a project. I strive to be an invitational leader by using the spiritual gifts each of us are given to make the whole stronger.

My Enneagram personality type (8 wing 7) is sometimes summarized as "The Nonconformist". When I first read that I bristled at that phrase, but I also identify with it. I examine problems from a perspective of innovation rather than convention, realizing what has worked before may not work now. In all that I do, I advocate for the rights of others, especially people who have been historically marginalized, be they women, people of color, or the LGBTQ+ community and (specifically in the church) youth and young people. I am idealistic while being practical and thinking creatively.