

**Indiana-Kentucky Synod, ELCA**

**2016 BISHOP ELECTION  
BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION FORM**

**NOMINEE FOR BISHOP OF THE INDIANA-KENTUCKY SYNOD, ELCA**

1. Name: William O. Gafkjen
2. Current Position: Bishop, Indiana-Kentucky Synod, ELCA
3. Congregation Membership: Cross & Crown Lutheran Church, Indianapolis, IN
4. Date and Year of Birth: June 17, 1957
5. Date and Year of Ordination: November 10, 1985
6. Previous Positions: Assistant to the Bishop, Indiana-Kentucky Synod (2002-2010); Pastor, Christ the King, South Bend, IN (1999-2002); Pastor, Evangelical Lutheran, Duncansville, PA (1997-1999); Campus Pastor, Lutheran Campus Ministry @ Penn State, State College, PA (1991-1997); Pastor, Holy Trinity, Niles, MI (1987-1991); Pastor, Grace, Mora, MN (1985-1987)
7. Education and Earned Degrees (with institutions and years, most recent first):  
Coursework, Executive Certificate in Religious Fundraising, Lake Institute on Faith & Giving (2014-2015); Doctor of Ministry degree, Columbia Theological Seminary, Decatur, GA (2004); Master of Divinity degree, Luther Northwestern Seminary, St. Paul, MN (1985); BA degree (Sociology), St. Olaf College, Northfield, MN (1979)
8. List up to five (5) current or past synodical or churchwide activities that would inform your service as bishop of this synod.  
Current: Bishop, Indiana-Kentucky Synod; Chair, ELCA Conference of Bishops; ELCA Church Council and Executive Committee; St. Olaf College Board of Regents  
Past: ELCA Word & Service Roster Task Force; Chair, ELCA Word & Service Roster Entrance Rite Task Force; Chair, ELCA Conference of Bishops Roster Committee; Trinity Seminary Board

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

Serving Thanksgiving meal at Lutheran Child & Family Services, Indianapolis; sorting new & used clothes and other items for annual pre-Christmas county-wide give-away for people in need; community service as part of ELCA youth gathering; partnering locally with Bread for the World national leadership to engage civic leaders in addressing domestic and global hunger concerns

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

Trust in Jesus, crucified and risen for the life of all people and creation; calm and caring presence, especially in difficult or tense situations; hopefulness and trust that God is doing new things among us; compassion; open-mindedness; integrity; persistence and flexibility; ability to cultivate, articulate, and motivate toward common vision; passion for the gospel; welcome & inclusion of diverse people and perspectives in common mission; prayerfulness

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)

Our principal challenge is to allow God's Spirit to transform and reform us into new and emerging ways of being church that are vital, sustainable, faithful and fruitful for God's mission of healing, hope, and reconciliation in the world. We will address this challenge most effectively by continuing to listen deeply (through prayer, scripture & conversation), think creatively (inspired by God's Spirit), and act & experiment boldly together, living in forgiveness and hope.

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

Christ-centered, mission-focused, collaborative, and visionary...I look for, utilize, and celebrate the gifts of all, welcoming contributions from the entire "team" as well as those affected by outcomes. I focus attention on addressing "adaptive" challenges (e.g. cultural change). I love to learn and I seek continual improvement as a leader. I listen first and ask lots of questions.