

Pre-election Canvass Biographical Information



1. Full name

The Rev. Yehiel Curry

2. Congregational membership (including city and state)

Shekinah Chapel Lutheran Church, Riverdale, IL

3. Ordination year and location

2009 Metropolitan Chicago (Shekinah Chapel Lutheran Church – Riverdale, IL)

4. Have you attended a rostered leader’s boundaries workshop? Yes

If yes, what year and what location?

2018 Metro Chicago (Naperville, IL)

5. Have you attended a comprehensive systemic racism workshop, like the synod’s 2.5-day “Understanding and Analyzing Systemic Racism” workshop? Yes

If yes, what year and what location?

2011 Metro Chicago (LSTC)

2015 Metro Chicago (Shekinah Chapel)
2016 & 2017 Metro Chicago (Churchwide)
2018 Berkley California (PLTS)

6. Language proficiencies

English

7. Formal education and earned degrees (include institutions and years of attendance)

Lewis University – Romeoville, IL BA Psychology, Minor Secondary Ed. 1991-1995
Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago (LSTC) - Chicago, IL
Theological Education for Emerging Ministries Certification 2006 – 2008
LSTC – Chicago, IL MDIV 2009 – 2013

8. Current position

Pastor, Shekinah Chapel Lutheran Church 2013- Present

9. Recent positions

Mission Developer, Shekinah Chapel Lutheran Church 2007-2012

10. Recent or most impactful continuing education experiences (including year and location)

2009 ELCA College of Developers Immersion New Orleans, Louisiana
2010 ELCA College of Developers Immersion Tijuana, Mexico
2011 Emerging Ministries Conference at Princeton Theological Seminary
2016 Preaching Pilot Liberia Africa
2017 Visit with Companion Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in South Africa

11. Community involvement

Executive Director of Rescue, Release and Restore Inc. - houses the Safe In My Brothers' Arms (SIMBA) Camp, Safe In My Sisters' Arms (SIMSA) Camp & the Multicultural Youth Leadership Academy (MYLA) camp - in partnership with Glocal and Living Water Ministries.

Founder and member of Riverdale Organized for Change – secured 7.9-million-dollar loan from the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency to repair antiquated sewers in Riverdale.

Community Renewal Society – serves on the Policing Action Team (Chicago) and Millennial Housing Project (Riverdale).

Caring Together, Living Better – developed a program to provide transportation for healthcare workers who were finding it difficult to navigate public transportation schedules.

Coloring Mental Health – facilitator for Community Organizing training at the annual conference which is held at Garrett Theological Seminary.

Annual Block Club Party – on the last Friday of July, Shekinah Chapel sponsors a block party where we dance, fellowship and distribute 200 bookbags and school supplies to our children and our neighbors.

12. Congregational involvement

Produce Mobile - facilitated collaboration with the Greater Chicago Food Depository to distribute 10,000 pounds of produce once per month at Shekinah Chapel addressing the issue of food scarcity as Riverdale is a food desert.

Lay Leadership Development – designed and facilitate a 2-year program which assists lay leaders in discerning their call to lay leadership; manage 16 ministries.

13. Synodical involvement

Companion Synod Advisory Team - Helped to discern and design a Metro Chicago congregation to ELCSA Central Diocese Parish partnership. 2017- Present.

Ministry in Context – served as supervisor and mentor for LSTC students assigned to Shekinah Chapel. 2017-2019

Culture, Worship & Fellowship Exchange – Messiah Lutheran in Wauconda, IL. (2010-2012)

Culture, Worship & Fellowship Exchange and Dialogue on Race – A relationship with St. John Lutheran Church in Wilmett began as a partnership with our summer day camp Safe in My Families Arms (SIMFA). This relationship evolved into a safe space where we could visit each congregation for a fellowship meal where both church councils came together to facilitate conversations about class and race in Metro Chicago. (2012-2018)

Rods and Blessings publication in Metro Chicago periodical Let's Talk 2015

Next Level Leader Group – Intentional Impact group for reproducing leaders. (2011-2013)

14. Churchwide involvement

Coordinator for Congregation-Based Organizing (2019 – Present)

Co-facilitator for Recovery & Re-Entry Cohort / Congregations (2018 – Present)

ELCA Disability Ministry Team (2018 – Present)

Youth Ministry Network, Multicultural Initiative, Facilitator (2013 – Present)

Multicultural Youth Leadership Event (MYLE) Speaker (2018 Houston)

Rostered Ministers Gathering, Small Group Leader (2017 Atlanta)

MYLE Planning Team (2015 Detroit) and (2012 New Orleans)

Churchwide Assembly Preacher (2013 Pittsburgh)

National Youth Gathering Speaker (2012 New Orleans)

15. Describe your sense of call to the office of bishop (1,000 characters maximum).

God seems to have always been preparing me for this. I was born and reside on the Southside of Chicago with my family in one of the communities that lead the news when discussing crime, poverty and pain. Our synod's witness amid the region's pain is an opportunity for outreach on the Westside, downtown and throughout the Chicago Metro area. After college my passion was helping families navigate the foster care system. Doing social work, I learned about the death of 5-year-old Eric Morse who was a student at Doolittle School. Later I began teaching at Doolittle, and I met many "Eric's". I was inspired to look for mentoring for my students and discovered SIMBA, an ELCA pilot program. SIMBA started a worship service called Shekinah Chapel. As I joined them for worship, I sensed I was being called to SIMBA, Shekinah Chapel and the wider

Church. Today I feel God's call to share more broadly my gifts and experiences I have been graciously given in an effort to expand God's Kingdom.

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

I would bring the gifts of:

- *Innovation & Resource Development*—I developed 12 ministries ranging from a collaborative cross-cultural immersion in Suburban Connecticut to inner-city block parties in Riverdale.
- *Administration & Teambuilding*—Since 2006, I have served as Exec. Dir. of Rescue Release & Restore youth camp and mentoring organization, an extension of Shekinah Chapel. I direct the Sendakid2camp fundraising campaign.
- *Investments & Asset Management*—Helped families, organizations and institutions develop financial plans and implement strategies to protect capital, address debt and invest for the future.
- *Preaching & Worship*—I've been honored to minister God's Word in Liberia, South Africa & Rwanda, Africa; before 35,000 at the Youth Gathering; and various synods. Engaging communities across Illinois and the nation through the power of preaching and worship prepares me to speak into the hurts and hopes of people across a broad spectrum.

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

My preferred leadership style is a team approach. In 2005 Shekinah Chapel was on the brink of closing. This once thriving ministry had been reduced to a handful of twenty-somethings who asked me, a novice leader, to become their Mission Developer. In 2006, I closed my financial service office and enrolled at the seminary. As the congregation began to grow and flourish, God had prepared me with the tools to connect, teach and develop good fiscal responsibility at Shekinah. I utilized skills I cultivated in social work, education and finance to nurture team leadership. I believe an effective leader is one who has the ability to manage cooperative work as well as conflict. I empower and inspire others to take their rightful place at the ministry table despite perceived differences. I strive to clearly and effectively communicate a corporate vision that involves everyone.

###