

Pre-election Canvass Biographical Information



1. Full name

The Rev. Heidi Lynn Torgerson

2. Congregational membership (including city and state)

St. Luke's Lutheran Church of Logan Square, Chicago, IL

3. Ordination year and location

2006, Martin's Lutheran Church, Casselton, ND

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

If yes, what year and what location?

2005, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago.

While rostered leader's boundaries workshops are not readily accessible to ministers in missionary and churchwide calls, churchwide staff do participate in an annual sexual harassment training, the last of which I completed in November, 2018.

- 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?

2015; ELCA churchwide organization using Race Forward's training tools.

- 6. Language proficiencies**

English; first language

Spanish; fluent

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

BA, Luther College, Decorah, IA, 2000

M.Div., Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, 2006

- 8. Current position**

Director for Mission Personnel & Leadership Formation, ELCA Global Mission

- 9. Recent positions**

Program Director, ELCA Young Adults in Global Mission, 2009-2016

Pastor/Missionary, Mexico City & Cuernavaca, Mexico, 2005-2009

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

ELCA Leadership Development Program, 2016. This year-long intensive program, led by executive coaches for the nonprofit and for-profit business sectors, focused on developing skills for leading effectively in times of rapid change.

ReconcilingWorks Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, & Gender Expression Training:

Supporting LGBTQIA+ Siblings in Mission Service, Chicago, 2019.

Biblical & Theological Foundations for Gender Justice Strategy Development, Chicago, 2018.

Christian Contemplation as Action & Reflection, Chicago, 2015.

11. Community involvement

Montessori Academy - Spanish Immersion preschool volunteer
Holmes Elementary School Parent-Teacher Organization
Moms with Shared Custody community small group convener

12. Congregational involvement

I am an active member at St. Luke's Lutheran Church of Logan Square, participating in The Village ministries with families and in various public actions through our congregation's community organizing initiatives. I also provide musical leadership as a cantor and serve occasionally as supply preacher and presider when our pastor is away.

13. Synodical involvement

As a senior member of the churchwide staff I have had the privilege of preaching, presenting, and meeting with synod councils and bishops at multiple synod assemblies across the ELCA. I have also been an active member of the Domestic Mission unit's Partnered Synod Project over the past 18 months. The Partnered Synod Project connects, listens to, and resources the bishops and Directors for Evangelical Mission of five identified synods in their strategic mission planning. A small group of churchwide staff and these synodical leaders come alongside one another in discussions focused on everything from congregational renewal and leadership development to managing the systemic grief of congregational closure and envisioning new models for vital ministries. Finally, I serve as a supply preacher and presider at congregations across the Metro Chicago Synod.

14. Churchwide involvement

I'm a member of the Senior Leaders team of the churchwide organization, providing strategy support to our Presiding Bishop and her staff. I am also one of four members of the Global Mission unit's administration team. The administration team oversees expenditures and international grant disbursements of approximately \$40 million annually, responds to sensitive personnel matters, and accompanies our executive director in setting a vision and direction for the ELCA's global engagement.

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

My sense of call to the office of bishop is rooted in a deep, active passion for how the liberating gospel of Jesus Christ takes shape in the world. The narrative of decline that surrounds cultural Christianity and our church institutions is real. The Metro Chicago Synod is certainly not immune to it, nor to the anxiety that it creates. We need to care for one another in that anxiety,

remembering that Jesus challenges us to move beyond our anxiety and into a profound, honest engagement with Christ, with our neighbors, and with the world. I am confident that God is trying to birth something new in and through the ELCA. I have seen powerful glimpses of this something new through the witness of skeptical young adults, in the community organizing efforts of Mexican peasant farmers, in the creative preaching of a first call pastor, in the boldness of a congregation selling its historic building to set itself free for mission. I believe strongly that the Metro Chicago Synod, with its rich resources and strong diversities, can become for this whole church yet another living example of the something new that God is calling us toward. It would be my profound honor to lead this synod more fully into that something new as bishop.

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

I am a preacher. I am a gracious presider at font and table. I am a teacher. I am a compassionate presence in times of crisis. I am a pastor. And, this church has called me to serve as a pastor in ministries that are very atypical in the lives of most clergy. These atypical calls – as a long-term missionary, with young adults from across the ELCA, and in large-scale administration within our churchwide structures – have gifted me with a unique set of ministry lenses, skills, and networks of relationships. This particular formation as a pastor and as a leader will allow me to differently support, encourage, and challenge our pastors, deacons, and congregations to honor our history while also opening ourselves in new ways to the creative, agitating, hope-filled movement of the Holy Spirit. I would bring vision, courage, creativity, and a deep relational presence to the office of bishop. I would also bring the administrative and team-building skills necessary to translate vision into reality.

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

I am a strong, natural leader with a highly relational style. I am a careful listener, a thoughtful question-asker, and a champion of helping people's passions taking root in the world. I seek to intentionally surround myself with people who have gifts and perspectives that I don't possess. I am committed to investing in people's lives as together we invest in the congregations and the communities around us. I am a big-picture thinker and a connector of people. I am skilled at leading from a vision and bringing people along with me. I value self-awareness in my own leadership and in those with whom I serve. I also believe fully that the joy of the gospel can and should spill out into our lives! I work to intentionally foster a culture that values humor, lightness, and yes – even fun! – as we live in service to God and God's people.

###