



Created, Clothed, Called: Virginia Synod's First Woman Pastor Conversation Guide

Pastor Jean Bozeman was the first woman to be ordained in the Virginia Synod on November 14, 1976 at First Lutheran Church in Norfolk. She was also the first woman on staff at a Lutheran seminary (LSTC), the first woman Assistant to the Bishop in Virginia, among other firsts as well. Throughout her many years of ministry she served the Virginia Synod and wider church in many capacities.

In March 2021, Pastor Bozeman joined Pastor Kelly Bayer Derrick, current Assistant to the Bishop in the Virginia Synod, to reflect on her many years of leadership in the Lutheran church and to share her hopes for the future. The video and accompanying conversation guide were created for the Synod's 2021 celebration of Women's History Month. These resources can be used for group study or individual reflection.

Warm-question: Who is the first woman pastor that you remember?

View the video.

Shorter Version: <https://youtu.be/rnl9HTEsYgY>

Longer Version: <https://youtu.be/3yMDd4kFkGY>

Feel free to pause the video throughout for questions and group discussion.

Read the following passages together.

- Genesis 1:26-27
- Galatians 3:26-28
- Acts 2:17-18

Why do you think these verses were selected to accompany this video?

What other passages or stories come to mind when you reflect on women's ordination and leadership in the church?

Read the following quotes together and discuss what they mean to you.

“God created this human being. God baptized me. And God gave me the gifts. And I can’t believe that God said, ‘Oh, but I really didn’t mean it.’”

What do you think Pastor Bozeman meant when she said this?

What gifts have God given you to share with the world?

“I was baptized in this church. I grew up at this church.... This is the first time, January 7, 2021, in which I went to light the candles in my home church. That sounds like no big deal, but somehow we always said to the little girls, ‘You can’t do this.’ And now we say, ‘God created all of you.’”

Why do you think this was so meaningful to Pastor Bozeman?

What were you allowed, or not allowed to do, in worship as a child? Looking back, what do you think this says about the culture of the congregation at the time?

“In my sweetest voice I said, ‘You know that’s right. But you know I know an awful lot of male pastors that didn’t make it in a congregation. And you know what, the church kept right on calling male pastors.’”

How do you think the woman who heard Pastor Bozeman say this reacted?

How would you have reacted?

Have you thought or heard this sentiment before?

“I want this church to be braver.”

In what ways do you feel God calling *your* congregation to be braver?

Who offers a witness to the gospel of Jesus that we may have a hard time hearing?

What other biblical stories help to open our hearts to those who are different from us?

Closing Prayer

Creating God, you have made each of us in your image, you have clothed us in your baptism, and you call us to serve you in the world. Empower us to use the skills you have blessed us with to help all those in need. Open our hearts and eyes to those around us who we may not see as having gifts to share. Thank you for the witness of Pastor Bozeman and all those who have come before us to show us your mercy and love. Amen.

Please feel free to share stories and photos of your community using this resources with Pastor Colleen Montgomery, Director for Digital Ministry of the Virginia Synod at montgomery@vasynod.org.