



**2023  
Virginia Synod  
Assembly**



## 2023 Virginia Synod Bishop Election–Biographical Information Form

<b>Name</b>	Rev. Dr. Phyllis Milton
<b>Pronouns</b>	she/her
<b>Current Position</b>	Pastor, Holy Communion Lutheran Church
<b>Congregation Membership</b>	Holy Communion Lutheran Church
<b>Date of Ordination</b>	Aug 23, 2014
<b>Previous Calls/Positions (with years, most recent first, as space allows)</b>	<p>Pastor, Holy Communion, Portsmouth, June 5, 2022 to present.</p> <p>Interim Associate Pastor, First Lutheran Norfolk, March 1, 2021 - November 1, 2021</p> <p>Pastor and School Chaplain , Gloria Dei, Hampton, January 1, 2013 - January 31, 2021</p> <p>Synodical Minister for Christian Formation, VA Synod, October 2012 - August 2017</p>
<b>Education and Earned Degrees (with institutions and year, most recent first)</b>	<p>Certificate of Work Completed -(Lutheran Semester) LTSS - 2010</p> <p>DMin - (Church Leadership Dev./Organizational Systems) Bethel Seminary - 2004</p> <p>Master of Arts in Christian Education - Bethel Seminary - 1995</p> <p>Master of Arts in Business Education - Georgia State University - 1980</p> <p>Bachelor of Science in Business Education - Morgan State University - 1976</p> <p>Assoc. in Secretarial Science - South Plains College - 1973</p> <p>Diploma - Levelland High School - 1971</p>
<b>How will recent continuing education experiences (classes, certifications, etc.) contribute to your service as bishop of this synod?</b>	<p>I am, at my core, a lifelong learner. Continuing education such as my ELCA Level 1 Coach and ACA Team Coach Training, will contribute to my service as Bishop by helping me to listen to the concerns (beneficial and challenging) that are having an impact on our rostered leaders and the congregations they serve and then to ask questions that can hopefully uncover options in their planning as they move forward.</p>

**How will current or past synod or churchwide activities guide your service as bishop of this synod?**

I have served on Synod Council and as Synodical Minister for Christian Formation on the staff of Bishop James Mauney. That experience allowed me to travel to our various congregations, listen to their needs and form meaningful relationships. Those conversations guided me in providing the content of Christian Education/Faith Formation programming that would be most advantageous to the individual and for their service in their congregation. Through that experience, I have learned that listening would need to be an important part of my service as Bishop.

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**How will current or past community-related activities contribute to your service as bishop of this synod?**

Being visible and available to communities in various contexts provides for me a broader perspective of the diversity of the Virginia Synod and an awareness of the individual's and communities' life's needs: physical, emotional, and spiritual. My community service experience would help me as Bishop to be attentive and responsive the "whole" person that I meet.

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**What is your vision for the VA Synod?**

My vision for the VA Synod is rooted in relationships. I want both rostered leaders and congregations to feel included and to know that they belong, that each one is essential to the ministry of the VA Synod. My vision for the VA Synod is individual and communal. We have been discerning as individuals, congregations, conferences and regions as to what God may be calling us to be and to do, and as such would take those nuggets of spiritual guidance from those gatherings, in consideration, as I discern with staff and Synod Council where God is leading us. I would take my lead from Joshua 1:9. I envision a VA Synod in which diversity, inclusion and belonging are essential to our growth, ministry, and mission development. I discern God calling us to be strong in our being and courageous in our doing, because He is and will be with us.

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**What is your understanding of the role of the Bishop (and staff)?**

My understanding of the role of the Bishop is found in 10.31 of the ELCA constitution. Processes such as oversight, administration, guidance, and advisement, but also to provide pastoral care and support for the Synod staff, rostered leaders and congregations. The staff is tasked with providing support (resource, administration, organization) so that the Synod as a whole can continue its mission and ministry.

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**What gifts do you have that would help you fulfill that role and lead the Synod to fulfill its calling from God?**

The gifts that I possess that would help me fulfill this leadership role are relational, administrative, and organizational. My variety of experiences as a Navy spouse has allowed me to provide leadership and to interact with a diversity of people in many different contexts. My openness, enthusiasm and excitement about the possibility of "what could be" has served me well in my pastorates.

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**Describe your leadership style.**

My leadership style is determined by the context I find myself in and the team that I am guiding to our objective. That means that I am flexible, adaptable, and ready to respond with the type of leader that is called for. Because of my education in church leadership development, and organizational systems, and my experience in owning my own business, I see myself as a leader who has a strong sense of detail and is structure oriented. Although, I may have an idea of what needs to be done, I am flexible in how it gets done, and am available for support and assistance. I see myself as a collaborative leader who believes that all involved need to be seen, heard, valued, and understood.

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**What does your support system (including your spouse/partner) think about your sense of call to serve as Bishop of the Virginia Synod?**

My support system includes mentors, my counselor, and my spouse. They are all completely supportive about my discernment to submit my name for consideration for Bishop of the VA Synod.

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