

The Central/Southern Illinois Synod

The Foundational Questions

—Bishop S. John Roth



Who are we?

The C/SIS is the communion of ELCA congregations in the lower 76 counties of Illinois. At the same time, we (the C/SIS) are a symbol of the broader fellowship our congregations share with ELCA Lutherans in the United States and with other Lutherans worldwide.

Why are we here?

We are here to fulfill God's purposes. *Called and gathered by God in baptism, we walk together with Christ to pray, proclaim and participate in and through the grace of God.* (the Mission Statement of the C/SIS). God calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies our congregations so that they may respond to God's grace with grateful worship of the triune God, with ongoing renewal in the Word and Sacraments, with an evangelistic heart for including others into reconciliation with God through the sacrificial death and life-giving resurrection of Jesus Christ, and with generous responses to human hurts and hopes locally and globally. In an overarching sense, the purpose of the C/SIS is to support, equip, assist, and advise the congregations of the synod in their calling from God in such a way that the wellbeing of all the congregations of the C/SIS and the wellbeing of the ELCA as a whole are enhanced, for the sake of our witness to the gospel. We are gathered into the C/SIS also in order that there may be ecclesial oversight exercised among our congregations for the sake of our common stewardship of the gospel, again, consistent with the wellbeing of all the congregations of the C/SIS and the wellbeing of the ELCA as a whole.

What then shall we do?

Provide for a synod oversight structure comprised of pastors and lay people, including a bishop, who is called by the synod to serve pastorally, ceremonially, and administratively on behalf of the synod.

Provide working structures for cooperatively extending the mission-guided effectiveness of local congregations in such areas as worship, lay and professional learning, service to local and regional communities and to communities world-wide, evangelism, and stewardship. The C/SIS would strive to be structurally nimble in order to build up the body of Christ as opportunities appear, for example, to renew existing congregations where that is appropriate or to initiate new ones where that is appropriate, or to focus on ministry to and with young adults in college and university communities or to focus on ministry to and with persons living in group homes in such communities.

Provide working structures for mutual support, accountability, and encouragement among congregations, rostered leaders, and lay leaders in the synod.

Maintain and enhance cooperative, mutually supportive and responsible relationships with church agencies and institutions, with fellow synods of the ELCA, with ELCA "churchwide" units and personnel, with international companion synods, and with ecumenical partners, because these relationships are consistent with our purposes as a synod.

Steward the resources God has gifted our synod with – human resources and financial resources – to enable the synod to live out its purposes.