

Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod Bishop Nominee Biographical Information



Name: Michael B Sager

Current Position: Pastor

Congregation Membership: Hope Lutheran, Eagle ID

Date of Ordination: August 1994

List up to five (5) community, synodical, or Churchwide activities that would shape your call as bishop of this synod.

My calling as bishop would be shaped by my previous experiences working in the synod and in the business world. Within these settings I learned the importance of asking the "why" when it comes to making decisions and planning for the future. I participated at several levels of leadership with the synod and region from youth gathering to synod assemblies. Being responsible not only for the implementation of programming but also preparing and overseeing budgets. Being called to transformational ministry taught me the importance of the church moving away from a mindset of bringing people into the church to a new mindset of releasing the church into the world. It is not about bringing them into the church it is about the church going to where the people are in the world.

What is the essence of the promises you made at the time of your ordination, and how would you seek to fulfill those promises in your ministry if elected Bishop? (150 words max)

The essence of the promises I made in my ordination is that I trust and rely on the promises and grace of God knowing that none of the promises I made can I fulfill by relying on my own strength and wisdom. The calling is to live my life as a witness and follower of Jesus and inviting others on a similar journey. As a public leader I must seek to demonstrate God's love not just for the community but for the broader world. Through my use of the means of grace in worship and other opportunities showing the grace, love and forgiveness that comes solely from God. Providing a place where questions can be raised and daily living can be interpreted and understood in the light of the gospel.

Describe your spiritual life and the way you prepare for ministry each day. How do you maintain spiritual focus and integrity? (150 words max).

My spiritual life is informal. I bathe my day in prayer and time for reflection of touch points in my life with God and scripture. Using conversations and discussions to inform and challenge my self-understanding of God. Often I use a formal devotional to help structure my day. Studying scripture for sermons or Bible studies not only gives me insight into the text it also allows me to personally reflect on how the word is working in my life. I stay informed and connected to what is happening in the world and the community so that I can use these events to help engage others in conversation around God and faith.

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What, in your opinion, is the measure of great leadership, and in what ways do you either achieve or aspire to achieve this standard? (150 words max).

Great leadership enhances the gifts of others and provides an opportunity for others to develop their own leadership styles. Through great leadership visions are created and purposes are formulated and commitment to goals are made. Leadership is always looking into the future and mapping out the possibilities. This type of leadership is aware of the details while maintaining a focus on the whole, without having to do all the work themselves. For me great leadership always includes others while being willing to step out in front when appropriate and necessary.

What is your leadership style? (150 words max).

My leadership style is highly relational. My entire career whether in accounting or in formal ministry has been structured around a team based approach. I seek out teams and others to help me develop and implement plans and goals. While in ministry, I have worked to bring churches together around ministry; from a consolidation of congregations to joint youth programs. I also seek partnership outside of the church environment, whether it is the YMCA or a local government, for I believe we can do more together than we can apart. My leadership style is structured around that belief. I am also one that is able to see the big picture and how things are connected together while seeking others to help maintain and focus on the details.