



Name Darryl Thompson Powell

Current Position and Dates of Service Program Associate Director for African Descent Ministries, ELCA (7/2015)

Current City and State of Residence Elk Grove Village, IL

Congregation of Membership United in Faith Lutheran Church

Date and Year of Ordination 09 / 14 / 96

Previous Positions	Dates of Service
Interim Pastor - Resurrection L.C., Franklin Park, IL	6/2017 - present
Interim Pastor - Holy Trinity L.C., Elgin, IL	10/2015 - 12/2016
Interim Pastor - First L.C., Harvey, IL	3/2015 - 9/2015
Interim Pastor - Zion L.C., Elgin, IL	6/2013 - 9/2013
Pastor - Bethany L.C., Chicago, IL	3/2005 - 3/2013
Pastor - Bethlehem L.C., Muskegon Heights, MI	8/2003 - 3/2004

College and Post Graduate Degrees and Institutions	Dates of Study
Trinity Lutheran Seminary, Columbus, OH (MDiv)	6/1992 - 5/1996
Wittenberg University, Springfield, OH (BA)	8/1983 - 6/1989

Current Board / Committee / Community Service	Dates of Service
Lutheran Outdoor Ministries (national board)	2018 - present
Nominating Committee Chair (Metro Chicago Synod)	2011 - 2013, 2016 - present
Candidacy Committee (Metro Chicago Synod)	2009 - present
Antiracism Team (Metro Chicago Synod)	2007 - present
African Descent Strategy Team (Metro Chicago Synod)	2007 - 2016

Past Board / Committee / Community Service	Dates of Service
Advocate Trinity Hospital, Chicago, IL (Governing Board)	2009 - 2017
PTA Treasurer, Ray Elementary School, Chicago, IL	2009 - 2013
South East Alcohol and Drug Abuse Center, Chicago, IL	2009 - 2011
Lutheran Outdoor Ministry Center Oregon, IL (board)	2006 - 2013
Diversity Committee for Lutheran School of Theology at C	2006 - 2012

Honors / Honorary Degrees / Specialized Training / Other  
Crossroads' Antiracism Training - 1998, 2005, 2012  
Ministry Coaching Training - 2013

What gifts do you believe you would bring to the office of bishop?

A passion for the gospel, an openness to the guiding of the Holy Spirit, and a strong desire to help people and churches be what God has called them to be are all gifts that God has given me. I also have a strong appreciation for history and tradition while recognizing the need for the church to constantly evolve while remaining true to the gospel. A Bible verse that has guided me since I began seminary is Romans 12 verse 2: "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect." It's only been a few years since I realized verse 3 is just as important: "For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned."

When someone asked permission to submit my name for RMS bishop, I asked the person who made the request, "Why me?" The person's response included other gifts: a) I'm steeped in Lutheran tradition; b) I have a strong sense of social justice; c) I have varied experiences in the ELCA in ministry as well as geography; d) I'm committed to outreach and full participation in the ELCA of people of color and also the marginalized. I believe these are just a few of the gifts that all bishops (as well as lay leaders, deacons, and pastors) need for the ELCA to move forward in the 21st century.

What would excite you the most about responding to this call? What would be the most challenging aspect of this ministry for you?

Honestly, the prospect scares me. I interact with bishops from across the ELCA on a regular basis and I see the challenges they face. It amazes me that so many want to be bishop for more than one term! When I was right out of seminary, I said on multiple occasions "I will never be bishop." (I also said I would never work at Churchwide). Since then I've learned I shouldn't tell God what I won't do. I often tell seminarians and rostered leaders that they need to be open to where the Spirit is calling them and not close off any possibilities. I realize that in saying "I will never be bishop," I am doing exactly what I encourage others not to do. Instead, I need to be more like Philip in Acts 8 and go where the Spirit is guiding, even if that is outside my comfort zone. One of my biggest challenges if I were elected bishop, then, would be to truly live into where God is calling me.

Another challenge would be making time to build relationships to be the pastor to the whole synod (all 160+ congregations and 400+ rostered leaders) and not just the administrator of the synod. As with a parish pastor, there is much that a bishop must do that is administration. And as with a parish pastor, I believe it is important to spend time out of the office and among the people. It is easy in both cases to only respond to the ones who are the loudest (or give the most money). But we are called to be in relationship with everyone and not just a few. I realize this is an idealized view, especially for a synod with congregations in five states. It's important, still, to look at ways to try. As Robert Browning said, "A [person's] reach should exceed [their] grasp, or what's a heaven for?"

As bishop, how do you envision being a living model of faith? Give examples of how you live out your faith through your actions.

I would be a living model of faith as bishop just as I am as a pastor. Three biblical passages have been my guide for this. The first is Matt. 22:39b "... Love your neighbor as yourself." Jesus didn't say, "Love your Jewish neighbor, or your nice neighbor, or your neighbor who thinks like you." Love your neighbor. My neighbor doesn't have to like me or agree with me. They could have said hateful things about me. They could be ageist, racist, sexist, or homophobic. My neighbor could have killed an unarmed person on the street, 17 students at a school, or 58 at a concert. It doesn't matter what they did. I don't have to condone what they did. If they have committed a crime, they will still have consequences for their actions. I still need to love my neighbor as myself.

The second passage says: "Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice, and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you" (Eph. 4:31-32). Despite my neighbor's actions, I need to let go of negative feelings and forgive my neighbor. Forgiveness is a natural response to the mercy of God in forgiving me. Just as God is hurt when we sin, I can be hurt when my neighbor sins. If I have experienced God's forgiveness, then I need to extend that forgiveness to my neighbor.

Finally, John 3 verse 21: "...whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God." I strive to live by the truth. I don't do things behind peoples' backs (i.e., in the dark). I'm not perfect so I do make mistakes. But I don't try to bury, hide or deny my mistakes. I tell congregations I serve that they will always know where I stand. The same would be true for the synod if I was bishop.

What is your understanding of the role of a synodical bishop in the ELCA? In the Rocky Mountain Synod, specifically?

The ELCA says the role of a synodical bishop is to oversee the administration of the synod and its staff. That's an important role. When it is seen as the most important role, it sets up an "us-versus-them" mentality. The synod office is then seen as "the synod" but not the congregations and rostered leaders who are an integral part of the synod. The role of the bishop thereby includes building relationships between the synod office and the people and communities of faith that make up the synod. As stated before, this is a major challenge for a synod that covers five states even when the bulk of the congregations are in Colorado. It is not an insurmountable challenge, though.

Relationships need to be strengthened because without it, people will not buy into the bishop's vision for the synod. That is another important role of the bishop: setting the vision. "Where there is no vision, the people perish" (Prov. 29:18a). The vision for the synod not only sets the tone and direction for the synod but also gives people excitement about the future.

I believe the Rocky Mountain Synod is experiencing many of the issues that so many other synods face: declining attendance in aging congregations, decreased giving, and increased uncertainty about the future. In other words, a perception of scarcity. A bishop, therefore, needs to help ministries and leaders move from a mindset of scarcity to a theology of abundance. It's not an easy task. In Mark 6, Jesus feeds 5,000 men (not including women and children) with five loaves and two fish. The disciples were there. By Mark 8 when a similar situation arises, they are still stuck in scarcity yet Jesus feeds 4,000 plus with 7 loaves. We have that same abundance and do not realize it.

What would you expect of congregations (and other ministries)? And what should they expect of you?

I would expect the ministries and the ministers of the synod to pray for me on a regular basis as I would pray for them. I also hope they would be open and honest with me because I will be with them. I pray that they will also be open to change.

It would be nice to be invited to congregations when good things are happening and not just when there is trouble or conflict. I know that addressing issues in a congregation or with a rostered leader is part of the administration of the synod. When the only time synod staff is asked to visit congregations is when trouble is brewing, the synod office is no longer a partner in the ministry but a policing agency.

When a ministry or minister has issues with me or something that is being changed in the synod (or with the staff), I would ask that they heed the guidelines for dealing with conflict/quarrels as expressed in James 4:1-12:

- 1) Judge any selfish motives;
- 2) Stop focusing on how the world handles conflict and, instead, humbly implore God's grace;
- 3) Submit to God, resist the devil, and repent;
- 4) Stop judging and submit to God's Word.

I try to follow this guideline whenever I'm in a conflictual situation and hope that others will do the same.

Finally, no matter what happens I trust they will love me as I will love them.

How do you practice self care and nurture your spirituality?

A key for my self-care is establishing a sabbath and keeping it holy. In parish ministry and in my time with the Churchwide office, I have established a sabbath (day of rest) and honored that day. That doesn't mean if an emergency arises (i.e., something that can't wait until the next day) I will not respond. If my sabbath becomes a work day, then I rearrange my schedule so that I can have a sabbath on another day. This isn't a day off where I run around taking care of things I couldn't do on another day. It is a time for me to truly relax and be Darryl. My wife (also a pastor) and I try to have the same day as our sabbath. That means that many times the day is spent with her, going to the movie, a museum, an amusement park or other things that we enjoy. Whatever it might be, it is an intentional day of rest. I'm also intentional about taking vacation time. With school-age children still, it does not mean we go away for every vacation. We do schedule at least one big vacation each year that takes us away from home with the children.

As for nurturing my spirituality, prayer and meditation are an active part of that. They help to center me and also give me opportunities to quiet my mind and listen to God. I am also nurtured by listening to sermons by pastors I respect. Most of the time that is via sermons posted online or CDs I have purchased. At least twice a year I travel to preaching conferences that truly uplift my spirit: the Nelson W. Trout Lectures at Trinity Lutheran Seminary and the Hampton Ministers' Conference in Hampton, VA. When time permits, I go to other preaching and justice oriented conferences for religious leaders.