

## SESSION 2

# Modern Ecclesiology & How Lutheran Theology Can Save the World

### I. History of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)

- Formed in 1988 as a merger of three Lutheran denominations
  - Lutheran Church in America (LCA)
  - The American Lutheran Church (ALC)
  - The Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches (AELC)

### II. ELCA Structure today

- Churchwide, Bishops and Synods
  - Churchwide is the national ELCA staff & ministries, Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton
  - 65 Synods, led by 65 Bishops
  - We are part of the Central States Synod, Bishop Susan Candea

### III. Lutherans in the World Today

- Lutheran World Federation (LWF) - 77 million Lutherans world-wide
  - Germany 10.8 million
  - Ethiopian 10.4 million\* Single Largest Lutheran Denomination
  - Tanzanian 7.9 million
  - Sweden 5.9 million
  - Indonesia 5.7 million
  - India 4.3 million
  - *ELCA – 3.5 million, LCMS – 1.8 million?*
  - *Namibia – 50% of population is Lutheran*
- The Lutheran Church is on fire in the Global South. (In touch with Holy Spirit, Pentecostal movement)

### IV. How are ELCA Lutheran's similar or different than...

- Other Christian Denominations?
- Other Lutheran Denominations?

### V. What do we believe and practice?

- 2 Sacraments: Baptism & Communion – (Sacrament vs. not. Real vs. memory)
- All people are created in the imaged of God. Any person may called and equipped by the Holy Spirit to serve in leadership in the church. (Council, Pastor/Deacon/Bishop, etc.). This is particularly important because we include Women and LGBTQIA+ people in leadership whereas some other Christians do not.
- We take scripture seriously, which means not all literally.
- Scripture interprets scripture. Jesus is the lens through which the whole of scripture is rightly understood.

### VI. Lutheran Theology is essential for today's context.

- It refuses the overly simplistic either/or thinking.
- It refutes and responds to the objections Nones & Dones have with Christianity, thus resonating deeply with the hearts of millions who have walked away from the Church because of shallow (wrong) theology.
- We can adapt to different perspectives and worldviews without the whole system crashing down! (Always reforming)

# Answers to Last Week's Questions

## Catholic Church Response:

In 1545 the Council of Trent was called. This lasted almost two decades as the Catholic Church worked through doctrinal issues, moral issues, and structural issues. Some of the major items that came out of this were:

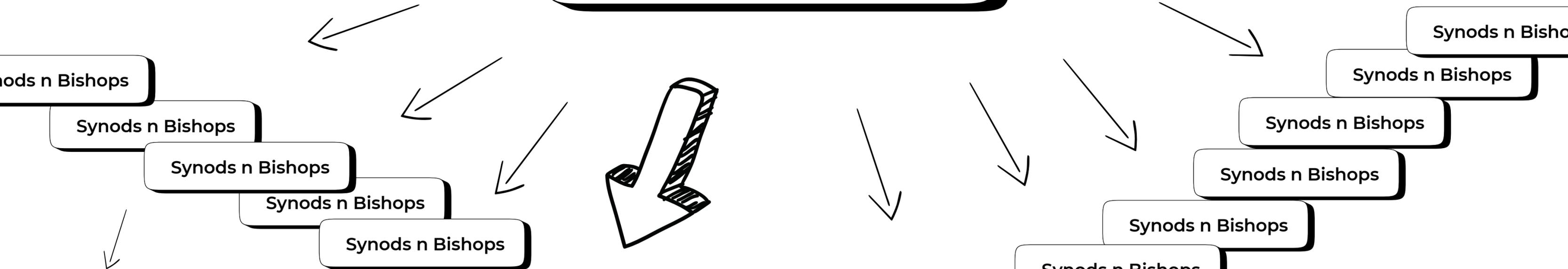
- Reaffirmation of certain doctrines
  - Sacrificial Mass (re-enactment of Christ's sacrifice on the cross)
  - Affirmation of Purgatory (and the Mass and prayers could assist souls in Purgatory)
  - Prayer to saints for help is acceptable
- Moral and Educational Reform
  - Moral reforms for clergy
  - Expansion of seminaries, training, and education

## Political Results:

- In 1546 the Holy Roman Emperor attacked the German Princes to try and put down the Reformation by force and bring unity back to the 'church' (empire). Eventually a truce was agreed to called the "Peace of Augsburg" in 1555. This made provision for Catholics *and* Lutherans (but not any other protestants such as Calvinists, Anabaptists, etc.)
- The Thirty Years' War (1618-1648) was long, widespread, and devastating. It involved a lot of groups around Europe. The divisions to the empire, the disputes over land and assets that resulted from the reformation were major factors that led to this war.

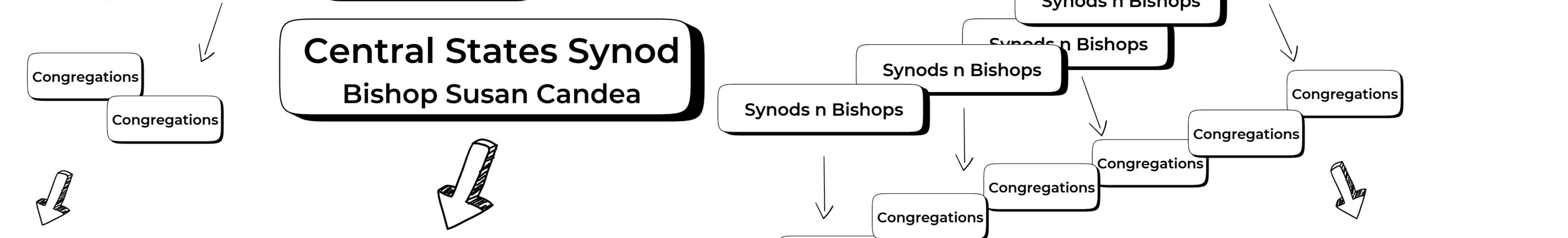
# ELCA Churchwide

Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton



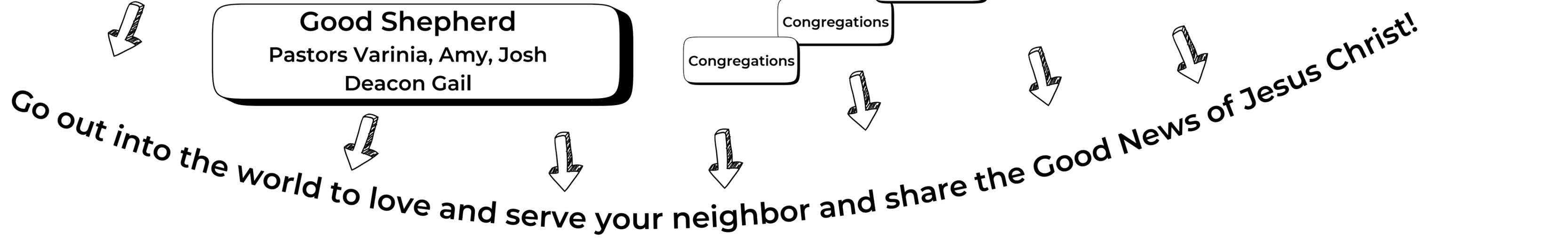
## Central States Synod

Bishop Susan Candea



## Good Shepherd

Pastors Varinia, Amy, Josh  
Deacon Gail



The American Lutheran Church  
(ALC)



The Association of Evangelical  
Lutheran Churches (AELC)



The Lutheran Church in America  
(LCA)



1988



**ELCA**  
History & Connections

**Connections**

Full Communion  
Partners

Lutheran World  
Federation

Lutheran World  
Relief



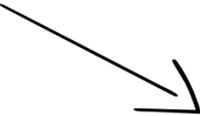
**Ministries of the  
ELCA**

ELCA World  
Hunger

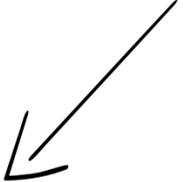
Lutheran Immigration and  
Refugee Services (LIRS)

Lutheran Disaster  
Response

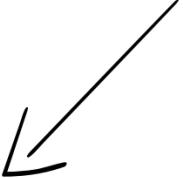
Young Adults in  
Global Mission



New Lutheran  
Denominations the split  
from ELCA in 2000s



Lutheran Churches in Mission for  
Christ (LCMC)



North American Lutheran Church  
(NALC)

# How is the ELCA similar and different than other Christian denominations?

