

**The Rev. Grant Stevensen, Senior Pastor, St. Matthew's Lutheran, St. Paul**



*Grant Stevensen*

**Please introduce yourself to us so we can know you better as a candidate.**

My wife Karen and I live on the East Side of St. Paul and share our home with five sons as they come and go from jr. high, high school, college and various jobs. I grew up in Stillwater, MN where I learned the values and the joys of neighborhoods, extended families and stable community. I have served the church as a pastor since 1991 in settings as diverse as Taiwan (prior to 1991), rural Wisconsin, Papua New Guinea, suburban Lino Lakes and now urban St. Paul. I serve as the president of the ISALAH organization and have found deep satisfaction in helping that organization grow and mature as a state wide vehicle for leadership development, and a voice for social, racial and economic justice.

**Describe the gifts you bring to the Office of Bishop. What gifts would you seek in your staff?**

I love the church and I have a passion for the church to be relevant both, to those of us who are inside and also outside our congregations. I have an ability to define and create community in the church so that we are able to put our energies into the mission of bringing good news to our neighbors and creating a more just world for everyone. I have experience organizing large numbers of clergy to move forward in their own personal development and in creating strategies both for their local congregations and for work we can do collectively. I have led a nationally recognized clergy caucus which two years in a row was awarded the "Most Effective Clergy Caucus in the Country" by the Gamaliel Foundation. I have helped a struggling urban congregation find new life through leadership development and re-visioning who God is calling us to be in this generation. We find strength in our past and in our tradition, but we know that God is also calling us to new and untried things. Most importantly, I think, I bring to the office of Bishop a deep understanding of the story of God's people and how we today are an important part of that story of salvation and healing. Organizer, pastor....

**Describe your leadership style (including how you have led in times of disagreement).**

For me, leadership is always a dance, sometimes a Fox Trot, but often Swing or even a Tango. In a dance, everyone is more comfortable and has more fun if someone leads, but a good leader is keenly aware of the abilities and the desires of his or her partner. My leadership is like that. I work to have empathy and understanding so that where we go is congruent with where everyone wants to go. At the same time, I actually lead which gives us a better chance of all getting to where we are trying to go. Still, there can be disagreement. My pattern is to first discern if the disagreement is technical (meaning a difference on how we get some place) or substantive (meaning we don't actually agree on where to go). Just identifying the difference between those two solves most disagreements. If the disagreement is substantive, I find it necessary to slow down, re-connect with one another and find where our vision comes together so that we can move forward in a unified strategy. Leadership is active, not passive work. My style is to be energetically engaged with the people and the organizations that I lead.

**How do you see yourself leading the Saint Paul Area Synod to live out the threefold vision during the next six years?**

I am energized by the threefold vision of our synod and the commitment we have made to each other to do this work. Having said that, the most important missional work in our synod is not generated from inside the synod office. Our synod is rich with leaders, and resources. As Bishop I would work to