

The Rev. Elizabeth Eaton, Presiding Bishop of the ELCA



Elected as the ELCA's fourth presiding bishop at the 2013 ELCA Churchwide Assembly, the Rev. Elizabeth Eaton earned a Master of Divinity degree from Harvard Divinity School and a Bachelor of Music Education from the College of Wooster.

Ordained in 1981, Eaton served three congregations in Ohio before being elected bishop of the ELCA Northeastern Ohio Synod in 2006 and re-elected in May 2013.

Eaton's four emphases for the ELCA are: We are church. We are Lutheran. We are church together. We are church for the sake of the world. These four emphases are fundamental to identifying who the ELCA is.

In 2015, under Eaton's leadership, the ELCA underwent an extensive vision process to help this church journey faithfully and effectively together in the years ahead. The process resulted in Future Directions 2025, a strategic framework that serves shared leadership across the ELCA to realize common aspirations and better face the challenges of this church.

In addition, with Eaton's guidance, the ELCA launched Bishop Eaton's Leadership Initiative, which encourages all ELCA members to seek out and inspire gifted people in our congregations and communities to consider a call to the ministry of the gospel.

Eaton also called together a task force in 2016 to draft a policy statement for inter-religious relations in the ELCA. As the chief ecumenical officer of the ELCA, she represents this church in a wide range of ecumenical and interfaith settings. She is the vice president for North America on the Council of The Lutheran World Federation and serves on the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA Governing Board and Development Committee, and Religions for Peace USA Council of Presidents.

As presiding bishop, Eaton travels extensively, representing the ELCA in a variety of capacities. This has included a visit to a Syrian refugee camp, commemorating the 500th anniversary of the Reformation with Lutherans from around the world in Namibia and participating in an ecumenical service commemorating the Reformation in the Lund, Sweden, cathedral with Pope Francis.

Eaton's husband is the Rev. T. Conrad Selnick, an Episcopal priest. They are parents of two adult children, Rebeckah and Susannah.