



- Bishop-elect
- Installation Planning Committee

NEWS AND MEDIA RELATIONS

In the Weeks Before the Installation

Arrange for the bishop-elect to do a **substantive interview** with a local newspaper reporter(s). This is an opportunity for the newly elected bishop to get to know the local reporter(s), setting the stage for a positive feature piece. In the weeks just prior to the installation, the incoming bishop is likely to be more prepared than immediately after election. Arrangements may also be made for interviews with the retiring or outgoing bishop.

Arrange for a **studio-quality color photograph** of the bishop-elect in clerics, and get several copies of the best one in both print and electronic formats. There will be many uses for these photographs throughout the bishop's service in the synod, including news purposes.

Prepare a short **news release** about the installation. Include the date and time of the installation service, where the installation will take place, and who will participate. Send it to all local news organizations—radio, television, newspapers and magazines—and follow up a few days later with a phone call to each. Be sure news organizations know the date, time, and location for the installation. Post your release on the synod Web site, and communicate all this information to all congregations, rostered leaders, and related agencies or institutions in the synod.

At the Time of the Installation

Assign **someone from the synod to work directly with representatives from the media** who attend the installation. This person should be able to answer questions, oversee and escort reporters and photographers, and help arrange interviews with synod (and churchwide) leaders.

Present reporters with a **media kit** that includes: the new bishop's vita or resumé, a copy of the studio-quality photograph, a copy of the sermon that will be preached at the installation (at least a web link to where a text will be posted soon after the installation), and basic information about the synod (number of congregations, membership, your contact information).

Be flexible when planning so that there is time before or after the service of installation for possible interviews and/or photographs with the new and former bishop. In some locations it may make sense to schedule a news conference. Remember to **include the presiding bishop** in interviews whenever possible.

(continued on the back)

Be clear about photography and video recording during the service of installation. Normally, no photographs should be taken during most of the worship service (and certainly no *flash* photography). At the time of the installation rite, assemble photographers in a predetermined location so that they can get quality photos of the moment itself without being intrusive or obstructing the view of people in the assembly (these are the photos that will appear in the newspaper). Reinforce their awareness that this is primarily a worship service and that flash photography or video recording distracts from the essence of the event. Ask them in advance to be mindful of the congregants and use no flash for photos or video. Be helpful but firm, and they will appreciate your assistance.

Keep **a list of reporters and photographers** that attend the installation. Follow up with a phone call or e-mail thanking them for their interest. Use this list to assist the bishop in the important work of meeting with local news reporters in the future

Write a brief summary of the installation service, and post your report with photographs on the synod Web site. Use the story and photos in the synod/bishop's newsletter.

After the Installation

It may be necessary to follow up with a reporter with answers that were not readily available at the time of the installation. Get back to the reporter as soon as possible. Reporters really appreciate people who can reliably help them do their work.

Assemble a file of all photographs, news releases, the printed worship folder, and other materials prepared for the installation. Include reports from local newspapers as well. This information will be helpful for anniversary dates, retirements, and for the *next* installation.

Arrange for the new bishop to meet with local news editors and key reporters at their places of work. These should be informal meetings with little or no agenda. Be sure to *get* contact information for key news people at these meetings, and *provide* them with contact information for the bishop.

For additional assistance, contact:

John R. Brooks
Director, ELCA News Service
John.Brooks@elca.org
800.638.3522 ext. 2958