



## SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR NLS Nominee Information Form

Name: Rev. Dr. G. Karl Gaston

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Home Secretariat: Sonbeam/VdC of Ohio Church Affiliation: ELCA

Weekend Attended (please include year): VdC of Ohio Men's weekend #67, April 2010

First and foremost, pray for guidance before and while completing this form.

I have read through the current Job Description located at <https://viadecristo.org/job-desc/SD.pdf> and have a good understanding of what the position entails:  Yes  No

Are you active in a reunion group?  Yes  No. If "No", Explain: Jeanne and I moved to Florida full time in 2018 and have not been able to establish ourselves in a reunion group here. The closest secretariat to us is in Tampa, 2 hours away. We have attended an Ultreya in Florida and are trying to coordinate to have a weekend for our Florida church in SW Florida. In Ohio we were active in a weekly reunion group. We look forward to being in a group again soon!

Any family information you would like to share: Jeanne and I are celebrating our 52<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary on June 17<sup>th</sup>. We have 3 adult children, 5 grandchildren, and 4 great grandchildren.

Background of churches served: St. Paul Lutheran Church, Ironton, Ohio; Associate Pastor, St. John Lutheran Church, Sidney Ohio; Triune Lutheran Church, Broadview Heights, Ohio; Atonement Lutheran Church, Springdale Ohio; St. John Lutheran Church, London, Ohio; Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Massillon Ohio. Linden Lutheran Church, Columbus, Ohio, as a retired pastor I do fill in occasionally at out home church, Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Port Charlotte, Florida

Your experience in your local Secretariat and VdC weekends: I served as the State Spiritual Director for Via de Cristo Ohio and as a spiritual director on at least lay six weekends and assisted on several clergy weekends.

Your experience on behalf of the NLS in attending and working: I have attended 4 National Gatherings as a delegate. Chairman of the 2020 NLS bylaws committee. I am the current NLS Spiritual Director.

Computer skills:  Word  Excel  Email  Power Point  Other Facebook

Your experience with Spiritual Direction: Over the years I've been involved in small groups that have pursued spiritual

direction through prayer, meditation and sharing. And of course, in my congregations with my members.

Your experience with event planning, attention to details and visioning: I worked on and helped plan Junior High Leadership Development camp weeks with Lutheran Outdoor Ministries. In London Ohio, we setup and worked on a 5-year development plan to expand the facility to respond to ministries more adequately in the community. This resulted in purchasing 30 acres of land as a future campus. Started an after-school program for neighborhood kids in an inner city setting, where we fed them with a hot meal, gave them a safe place to come, and prayed with them. In all the churches I have been in, if there was not an existing bible study, I started on. During my time in the Doctor of Ministry program I actually wrote and taught my own study. One of my favorite studies for my congregations was one that helped people become better disciples – How to tell their story. Another great study was a study on networking and how to get people into positions where they were in a good fit with what has needed instead of simply volunteering for something they don't know how to do. Prayer Groups were also very important for me. I started these in my last three congregations. During Covid with many of the churches closed we organized a service in the park we live in where people could stay in their golf carts, social distance, and still be able to worship on a weekly basis. In the past two years I have helped with the planning for the NLS National Gatherings.

Your experience with conflict resolution: I served several congregations that suffered from conflict with previous pastors. As a result, I assisted them in moving forward in positive ways.

Communication skills/experience: Jeanne and I were leaders of a Marriage Enrichment weekend where we taught couples how to better communicate with each other in a positive way. This course also helped with conflict resolution. Sometimes better communication on the front end made for less conflict in the long run. If there was conflict, how to better deal with it and work through it.

Other experience which would help you as the Spiritual Director: Having served as a parish pastor for nearly 48 years I have been involved in synodical ministries and just celebrated my 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Ordination. First was Lutheran Social Services Miami Valley as a board member. While in Cleveland, I served as the President of the Board of Lutheran Children's Aid and Family Services. I was Conference President for the Cincinnati Conference as well as President for the Columbus Conference. I served on a team to set up all the worship services for the Ohio Synod Convention.

Special interests: reading, golf, and cooking

How do you see the position of Spiritual Director promoting and supporting the growth and health of the Via de Cristo ministry? I see the role of the national spiritual director providing theological direction for the Board, making sure that what we say and do as Via de Cristo represents the love of God's Grace in Jesus Christ from a Lutheran perspective. I see the primary role of the spiritual director as advisory in nature.

Why do you feel that you are well suited to serve in this position? I believe that I served well as the State Spiritual Director for Via De Cristo Ohio. Having read the job description for the National Spiritual Director it is very similar to that of the statewide secretariat. I have always been a team player in whatever ministry I have been involved. I believe it is best when a group can arrive at a consensus rather than take a vote that ends up with 2 sides (winners and losers)

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Rev 2021