



## 2020 BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION FORM:

Pastor identified as possessing the gifts for the office of

### BISHOP OF THE SIERRA PACIFIC SYNOD

1. Name:
2. Current Position:
3. Congregational Membership:
4. Date of Birth:
5. Date and Year of Ordination:

#### 6. Previous Positions:

Solo Pastor: 2 point call, Lutheran Church of the Holy Trinity and St. Paul's Lutheran, Vallejo, CA  
Solo Pastor: Lutheran Church of the Holy Trinity, Vallejo, CA  
Tuesday meal director: Welcome Ministry (a ministry to those experiencing homelessness), San Francisco, CA  
Associate Director: Coalition of Welcoming Congregations, Pacific School of Religion, Berkeley, CA  
Pastor of Parish Programs: St. Francis Lutheran Church, San Francisco, CA  
Intern: Lord of Life Lutheran, Ann Arbor, MI  
Chaplain/ Youth Care worker: Marillac Center, Overland Park, KS  
Director: Transitional Care home for people with mental illness, Boston Health Care, St. Paul, MN

#### 7. Education and Earned Degrees (with institutions and years, most recent first):

Doctor of Ministry with emphasis in Liturgical Language, Pacific school of Religion, 2011-2013  
Master of Divinity, Luther Seminary, St. Paul, MN, 1999-2002  
Master of Divinity coursework, St. John University, St. Cloud, MN 1998-1999  
Master of Counseling Psychology, St. Mary's University, Minneapolis, MN, 1995-1997  
Bachelor of Arts, Psychology, University of Minnesota, Duluth and Minneapolis, MN 1983-1988

8. List up to three (3) current or past synod or churchwide experiences that would inform your service as bishop of this synod.

I have served on the Witness Disciple Team and now chair the team. This team works directly with the Director of Evangelical Mission (DEM). It has oversight of and supports mission starts and used to work with renewing ministries ( now a different program, congregation vitality). I have learned a great deal in walking alongside the developers and leaders of these congregations and how we can continue developing more new starts. I have also learned about how funding between the synod and churchwide is accomplished, especially when the synod was in-between DEM's. I have been trained through the churchwide office to conduct behavioral interviews for mission developers. This has given me skills in recognizing gifts for mission development in other pastors and also understand what it is like for them to go through the process of becoming a developer, making me better able to support the developers in this synod. I have completed churchwide training as a coach. This has helped me understand the coaching process and how it helps someone increase their leadership, relationship and conflict management skills. As bishop I would be a strong advocate of this program to benefit both ordained and lay leaders.

9. List up to three (3) current or past community activities that would inform your service as bishop of this synod.

I am a leader with Common Ground, a IAF community organizing group. This group has people of faith of various denominations as well as secular non-profits. Through this group, I have helped accomplish projects that benefit the Vallejo community. I also built relationships with city staff and elected leaders. I am able to speak at a city council meetings and offer support and/or challenge them because I have earned their respect. I was asked to be on a community panels, the most important one recently was the panel that interviewed candidates for police chief. This means that I already started a relationship with him and he is listening to my ideas about increasing the presence of police chaplains. I was present with tenants at a local apartment complex as they fought for fair rent increases when a new owner came in. I not only stood with them, but advocated for them as well. They recently formed a tenants union and are standing up for themselves.

10. What gifts would you bring to the office of bishop of this synod? (1,000 characters maximum)

I am not afraid to try new things. When the two congregations I served in Vallejo were struggling, I worked to merge them into a new vibrant community that is not only growing, but is also becoming more diverse. I have the ability to analyze a new thing as it is happening and change course when needed. I can work with a community to cast a vision, leading them out of scarcity thinking and fear into imagining a possible future, communicating a God of abundance who walks with us, inspiring us to new adventures. I have good listening skills, honed through my work and training in counseling. I can stay present even when I do not agree with the person. I preach grace and help all people see how they are loved by God. I can mediate when people are going through conflict, knowing when to be bold, when to speak and when to be silent. I am able to run efficient meetings. I am comfortable with social media and can use it effectively. I am organized and can help other people be organized as well.

11. Describe your leadership style. (1,000 characters maximum)

I work collaboratively, listening first before I speak. I do not speak just to hear myself talk, but ask questions that will elicit more solutions and vision. In meetings, I watch interactions between people, making space for everyone to talk while also holding people to the agenda.

I value working in diverse settings, especially where brainstorming between people with diverse opinions can happen.

I am not afraid to be bold and decisive, very able to speak truth to power. I am a strong advocate for those who feel not heard and I do not tolerate bullying. When I see it happening, I respectfully correct the person, and will be a mediator.

When it comes to decision making, I look the problem from all sides, gathering as much information as possible, and am decisive when I come to the decision. I am not afraid to admit when I have made a mistake and do learn from my mistakes.

I value using alternatives to in-person meetings when possible to make the best use of everyone's time.

12. Describe your discernment process in being open to serving as bishop of this synod. (1,000 characters maximum)

I feel very honored to be asked to consider this call and I do not take it lightly. I realize that this call is about me and my gifts for ministry but it also not just about me. I have spent a good amount of time in prayer so I make space for the Holy Spirit to work through me and align me with God's will for my ministry and the synod's ministry. I have discussed it with other pastors, advisor and friends I trust and have listened very closely when they helped me consider the many aspects of the call and have found encouragement. I know God is not done with me yet and I will continue to listen for the still, small voice speaking to me. I will continue to pray for the synod, for all the nominees, for the voting members and for myself in this discernment.

13. What do you see as the principal challenge to this synod in the next six (6) years, and how would you address it? (1,000 characters maximum)

I think the principal challenge of the synod is directly related to congregational health. There are two prevalent mindsets; lack of vitality and scarcity thinking born out of shrinking budgets. This requires multiple approaches. First, to address lack of vitality, I would encourage the continued development of the congregation vitality program now in formation, providing resources for connecting with their whole community and with each other.

Second, I would encourage congregations to merge where possible. I have done this and am working with others to develop resources to hopefully remove some of the fear from the conversation and make the process straightforward and streamlined.

Third, to combat scarcity thinking, I would encourage congregations to participate in the learning from churchwide's mission sustainability program; forming a non-profit for their ministry programs for access to grants and other community funding and reinvigorating the ministry.

14. What are your top 3 priorities for this synod? (1,000 characters maximum)

1. Synod vitality. Taking a hard look at the ministry of the synod and developing a plan for the following: a. reinvigorating the disciple teams, recognize their contributions and encourage continued work, b. recruit and train pastors for interim work, c. streamline the call process
2. Congregation Vitality. The health of our congregations is directly related to the health of the synod. I outlined above how I would address this issue.
3. Increased diversity. We have tried many approaches and perhaps it is time for something new. I suggest that we take the responsibility of educating ourselves on privilege and implicit bias; examining the many racial attitudes we have and moving out to all the ways we differ from one another. This is about intersectional justice. As a bishop, I would model this by getting an implicit bias coach to challenge me on a regular basis and encourage others as they are able as a start, then provide trainings, and listening events for the whole synod.

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Please submit the completed 2020 Biographical Information Form along with a digital photo by emailing the Sierra Pacific Synod Nominating Committee at [nominations@spselca.org](mailto:nominations@spselca.org) no later than February 1, 2020. Forms will be posted publicly on the Sierra Pacific Synod website ([www.spselca.org](http://www.spselca.org)) in spring 2020 six weeks prior to the Synod Assembly.

