



## 2020 BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION FORM:

Pastor identified as possessing the gifts for the office of

### BISHOP OF THE SIERRA PACIFIC SYNOD

1. Name:

John B. Valentine

2. Current Position:

Pastor / Senior Pastor (since 2003)

3. Congregational  
Membership:

Holy Shepherd Lutheran Church

4. Date of Birth:

June 20, 1959

5. Date and Year of  
Ordination:

September 25, 1988

6. Previous Positions:

Assistant / Associate Pastor at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, Paradise Valley, AZ (1988 - 1994)

Interim Pastor at Alzona Lutheran Church/Iglesia Luterana Alzona, Phoenix, AZ (1989)

Pastor / Sr. Pastor at Trinity Lutheran Church, Victorville, CA (1994 - 2003)

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

D.Min. (Biblical Preaching) -- Luther Seminary, St. Paul, MN (2009)

M.Div. -- Luther Northwestern Theological Seminary, St. Paul, MN (1987)

A.B. (History) -- The University of California, Berkeley, CA (1982)

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

Sierra Pacific Synod Resolutions Committee Member / Chair (2009-2016)

Sierra Pacific Synod Finance Team Member (2017-present)

Dean of the Delta Diablo Conference (2008-2013/2015-2018)

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

Executive Director and Licensee of the Lamorinda Adult Respite Center (a state-licensed adult day care for persons with dementia) -- 2006-present

(Volunteer) Facilitator of the Strategic Review Team of St. Francis Lutheran Church of San Francisco, CA -- 2019-present

Chair of the Town of Moraga's Traffic Safety Advisory Committee -- 2009-2015

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

A passion for the Gospel of Jesus Christ and for the biblical witness to that Gospel.

Competency with financial processes and organizational management -- paired with an awareness that budgets and organizational charts must serve our mission (and not vice versa).

A heart for the rostered leaders of our synod -- that they would be well-supported in their labors as servant-leaders.

The ability to "think outside the box" -- in the awareness that our church has suffered acutely from conformist thinking and one-size-fits all approaches to pastoral education, to ordained ministry, and to congregational structures.

Those who know me best tell me I'm uniquely gifted as a "chaos manager." I am energized by – and adept at – discovering ways to innovate win/win outcomes betwixt conflicted and competing voices.

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

Truly effective leadership can't be 'one-size-fits-all'. In some situations, effective leaders function as hands-on directors, in others as encouraging coaches, in others as supportive partners, in still others as appreciative delegators.

My preferred leadership style thus begins with situational assessment. Who is being led? What is being asked? What resources are at our disposal? What is our desired outcome? Only then can we ask HOW we might make that happen. If that means taking the lead, so be it. If that means working as part of a team, so be it. If that means inviting competent others to simply "Go for it!", so be it.

Ultimately, I would hope that my leadership would be more about those being led and less about me, more about what needs to be done and less about how I look doing it. Few things are as satisfying to me as the words of my current associate, who recently noted "Though I'm just part-time, you've made me feel truly a partner in this ministry we share."

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

While some considering this position may be akin to the prophet Isaiah -- who shot his hand up like an eager 3rd grader, saying "Here I am, Lord, send me!" -- my own openness to this position feels a lot more like the sheepish Jeremiah's "Are you sure?"

The organizational and missional challenges facing the next bishop of the Sierra Pacific Synod are formidable. Mission Support dollars from congregations have decreased while operational costs and organizational demands have increased. These realities will require that our next bishop be numbered among those -- as Mike Rowe used to note on the TV show "Dirty Jobs" -- "hard-working men and women who do the kinds of jobs that make civilized life possible for the rest of us."

I offer my name simply because I have been asked by people whom I trust and respect -- people deeply committed to the work of our synod -- to allow my name to go forward, aware that my skills may align with current synodical needs.

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)

The principle challenge facing our Synod at this particular point in its history is "Change". Our current synodical structure, budget and staffing plans are basically unchanged from 1988 -- when they were configured as 1980's solutions to 1970's concerns. Meanwhile, the culture in which we live has changed radically -- including the shift of mainline Protestantism from the culture core to its outer reaches.

We need structures which will facilitate flexibility, encourage creativity, disperse authority, and embody the diversity envisioned and articulated in the Book of Acts. We need to stand our top-down conformist models of church on their head and embrace bottom-up, situational thinking.

Replacing our outdated structure "on the fly" will be no mean feat. It will require us to be honest with one another -- trust one another -- and truly trust the One who said "I am with you always, to the end of the age!"

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

Facilitating a spirit of trust and mutuality among/between our congregations and our rostered ministers. These are challenging days to be the Church, and those challenges are compounded as we try to "go it alone". We need to foster a spirit of interdependence, weaving meaningful connections between all who are part of the body that is our Synod. After all, "the Synod" is not them, it is US!

Redeveloping our synod's organizational structure in a way that reduces costs, shares responsibility, invites diversity, embraces flexibility, encourages engagement, and increases overall effectiveness.

Getting serious about our long-voiced commitment to becoming anti-racist -- as individuals, as congregations and as a Synod. While we have talked at length about such commitments in the context of recent Synod Assemblies, our follow-thru has been lacking. If this is our stated synodical priority, ought it not be substantively reflected in both our budgets and our programming?

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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.

